UNCONTROLLED BREEDING

UNCONTROLLED BREEDING

OR

FECUNDITY VERSUS CIVILIZATION

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF OVER-POPULATION AS THE CAUSE OF WAR AND THE CHIEF OBSTACLE TO THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN

BY

ADELYNE MORE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

ARNOLD BENNETT

AND A PREFACE AND NOTES BY

DR. WILLIAM J. ROBINSON

1917

CRITIC AND GUIDE COMPANY

12 MT. MORRIS PARK, WEST

NEW YORK

LET the district physicians and district nurses who visit the poor be *not only* permitted, but *instructed* to teach the poor mothers how to avoid having more children than they can properly support and care for. W. J. R.

A LOW birth rate is, in general, not a sign of a low morality, but of a high morality, a high intelligence, a high sense of responsibility. W. J. R.

CONTENTS

PREFACE

WAR AND OUR DUTY TO PREACH BIRTH-CONTROL TO BACKWARD NATIONS.

BY

DR. WILLIAM J. ROBINSON.

War is the greatest of all crimes. Of all the anti-racial, anti-social and anti-individual phenomena war is the very worst. It is the most dysgenic of all dysgenic factors. It is evil through and through, evil without any good in it. To independent thinkers this question requires no arguments. Only those perverted by a vicious system of education, the morally defective, those utterly devoid of imagination, those with a strong *sadistic* strain in them, and finally those who profit financially by international murder, can speak of the "beneficent effects of war." Revolutions are sometimes good, sometimes bad; war is always bad. Some wars are unavoidable, but there is no such thing as a good war; at best war is an unavoidable evil, or the lesser of two evils, and a lesser evil is merely a *lesser* evil, but an evil still.

We have been treated ad nauseam to the twaddle of the weakminded—and of the munitions makers—about the ennobling and sobering effect that war has upon a nation. If we must become periodically blood-mad, if every few years we must disembowel a few million of our physically fittest men, if we must crush, maim and mangle our fellow-men who are *just as good as we are,* if we must ravish, burn and devastate, if we must destroy cities, villages, cattle, crops and oil wells, if we must subject millions and millions of women and children to indescribable horrors and the awful pangs of hunger, hunger that emaciates, sickens and finally kills—a more horrible death than that of the battlefield—if we must do all these things periodically in order to ennoble and sober up humanity, then it would be better if humanity perished at once from the face of the earth, perished wholly without leaving a single representative.

Fortunately, it is not necessary. We must not indulge in periodic blood-mad murder. The beneficence and necessity of war is the most damnable of all lies. War is no more necessary than the bubonic plague is necessary; war is no more beneficent than earthquakes are beneficent. War is brought about by well-known human factors, every one of which can be eliminated. Uncontrolled, unrestricted breeding which leads to over-population is one of the chronic causes of war. Birth-control besides its marvelously beneficent effect on the individual and the family, besides its eugenic influence,

would if accepted by *all* nations become the most efficient weapon against war. And all those who hate war, all those who hate militarism as incorporating all that is worst in human nature, should become the staunchest supporters of birth-control.

And here is an important point we must bear in mind. It is our duty to preach birth-control in our own countries, in countries which we are pleased to call civilized. But we have an equal, if not a superior, duty in spreading the principles and practice of birth-control among the backward nations, nations with a high birth-rate. It is of the utmost importance for the future of mankind that the birth-control gospel be persistently and incessantly preached among the peoples of Russia, China, Japan, India, Mexico, etc. Birth-control once introduced to a nation spreads rapidly—Germany is an excellent example of this—and even the poorest of the proletarian men and women are glad to make use of it, when they are properly instructed.

It will not do for civilized nations to reduce their birth-rate to the desirable minimum and permit the backward races to breed unrestrictedly. Trouble would be sure to ensue in years to come. It therefore behooves us to communicate with congenial spirits in the various countries and to urge them to become apostles of the religion of birth-control. If we cannot get native apostles we must send our own. Earnest men and women sent to various semi-civilized and primitive countries to

preach birth-control and instruct in its practice would be of more benefit to humanity than all Christian missionaries have been; their preaching would certainly bring more practical, more tangible results.

Yes, I advocate the sending of birth-control missionaries to all countries that need them; and to the remotest corners of the earth, if necessary. I am sure that there will be no lack of volunteers. And our birth-control pamphlets and books should be translated into as many languages as the Bible has been. Only the practice of birth-control by all nations—not its adoption by a few—will bring about the end of war. Our duty is clear. It is our duty to point out the connection between unrestricted breeding and war. Adeline More's book points out this connection, and I am therefore glad to present it to the American reader and to bespeak for it a large reading public.

William J. Robinson.

January 15, 1917.

INTRODUCTION

BY

ARNOLD BENNETT.

There are four principal arguments against birth-control, that is to say, against the use of contraceptives: the hygienic, the religious, the political, and the industrial. As regards the first argument, it is denied by competent authorities, and contradicted by general experience, that the use of the best modern contraceptives is detrimental to the body of either man or woman; while it is not and cannot be denied by anybody in possession of his wits that the limitation of births must have an immensely beneficial effect upon public health. As regards the second argument, I confess that I have never been sufficiently interested to study it, for like most ecclesiastical manifestations touching earthly welfare it is obviously not unconnected with politics. By what process of logic the Catholic Church forbids contraceptives I am unaware. I admit that I have known Catholic

parents of the moneyed class who went on having children in obedience to the injunction of their priests against contraceptives. On the other hand I have known Catholic parents of the moneyed class who strictly limited the number of their children and yet remained on the best terms with priest and church and conscience. I do not explain the riddle. As family limitation is very widely practiced among the most respected pillars of the Church of England and of all Protestant sects, I assume that outside the Catholic Church the religious argument is not very seriously maintained. As regards the third argument, the political, it simply is that birth-control will diminish armies. Few propositions are less certain than that birth-control will diminish armies, and few propositions are more certain than that if it does it will diminish them equally and therefore lighten the burden of war without prejudice to any one nation. But I am ready to pass the counterargument on one side, and to condemn the argument itself on its mere baseness. As regards the fourth argument, it is even baser than the third. It is a class argument, seldom or never avowed, but still powerful in the minds of the moneyed. It amounts to this: that if the moneyed class (which uses contraceptives) encourages or approves the use of contraceptives by the remainder of the nation the moneyed class will soon be inconvenienced by a shortage of labor.

The arguments against the use of contraceptives no longer count. In the polemics of the last few years they

have been damaged beyond hope of repair. They cannot possibly survive. On the other hand the arguments in favor of the use of contraceptives grow daily in force and persuasiveness. The proof of these two statements is plain in the ever-increasing vogue of contraceptives among all classes, but chiefly among the classes which are best educated and which in moral sense and in the sense of the responsibilities of citizenship are, to put it with moderation, certainly not behind the rest of the community. The most striking testimony to the essential vigor of the doctrine of birth-control may be seen in the recent surprising Report of the National Birth-Rate Commission. The Commission included a strong ecclesiastical and reactionary element, but it practically admits the entire doctrine, and nowhere does it actually condemn either the doctrine or the propaganda of the doctrine. This Report should be read. It marks a definite and very satisfactory stage in the history of the campaign for birth-control.

In my opinion the main present obstacle to the complete success of the movement in Britain is not the arguments against it nor the reactionary irrational opposition which confronts every beneficent and simple plan for the amelioration of mankind. It is the notorious false shame of the Anglo-Saxon race. We do not like to talk seriously about the use of contraceptives. Indeed we are so constituted that we cannot do so without feeling uncomfortable. The whole range of subjects turning upon sex-

ual intercourse is barred to our ridiculous modesty—unless of course we treat them lightly and salaciously. We can sit laughing and at ease with our wives on one hand and our young daughters on the other, in front of the spectacle of musical comedies whose chief attraction is the approving presentment of strumpets and tipplers; but we jib at the serious and profitable discussion of venereal disease. Some months ago the newspapers startled the public, *apropos* of the Royal Commission on Venereal Disease, by employing the word "venereal" in their headlines. It was a wonderful and reassuring exhibition of British courage; but unfortunately some papers, especially one which prides itself on special divorce reports, could not maintain the pace, and after a few weeks one noticed that "venereal disease" had been softened into "the social disease." And, by the way, the author of the following excellent pamphlet furnishes a first-rate example of our national timidity in the singular behavior of that very Royal Commission on Venereal Disease, which, although it was perfectly aware of the value of contraceptives in checking the spread of syphilis and gonorrhea, has kept absolute silence about contraceptives. It dared not even mention them.

And scarcely any writer in the press dares to mention them either. It is probable that nineteen editors and newspaper proprietors out of every twenty are convinced of the righteousness of the doctrine of birth-control, and

of its popular acceptance; but not one in a thousand of them would venture to back his own views by printing a candid article on the subject. Nearly all the work of press propaganda is left to *The Malthusian*, the official organ of the Malthusian League. This preposterous state of affairs can only be altered by rendering public opinion articulate, that is to say, by talking openly, and writing plainly to the newspapers, and putting plain questions to parliamentary and municipal candidates, about a matter which in modern social politics transcends nearly every other in importance—the matter of birth-control and the physical methods of birth-control. Public opinion exists, and it is the right sort of public opinion, but it needs to be cured of its dumbness. The subsequent necessary organization and advertisement would follow almost automatically. Faint-hearted upholders of the doctrine of birth-control are recommended to study the details of the journey of Mrs. Sanger across the United States not long since. Mrs. Sanger had stood in grave danger of losing her liberty for the offense of circulating information about the methods of birth-control. She was acquitted. She then, as a declared champion and expounder of birth-control, publicly visited fifteen of the principal cities of America. The journey from New York to the Pacific Coast was a triumphal progress. She rendered American public opinion articulate, and prejudice and ignorance got a notable blow.

ARNOLD BENNETT.

UNCONTROLLED BREEDING

OR

FECUNDITY VERSUS CIVILIZATION

"The Population Question is of vital importance. I wish we did not shirk it so much."—LORD MORLEY.

"The Population Question is the real riddle of the Sphinx."—HUXLEY.

"If Government knew how, I should like to see it check, not multiply, the population."—EMERSON.

"Compare the poorer parts of Paris with the growing wilderness of East London, and you will see one of the gains of the limitation of families."—THE RIGHT HON. J. M. ROBERTSON, M. P.

"Europe with a stationary population will be in a much happier condition; and problems of social reform can then be tackled with some hope of success."—THE VERY REVEREND DEAN INGE.

For a hundred years Europe has been slowly piling up a vast debt to hand down to future generations—the

social costs which have been omitted from the expenses of the industrial development that made our increase in numbers possible. The terrible housing conditions which must be swept away, the physical deterioration which has been allowed to take place, the deficient education which has been tolerated, the economic subjection of women—for all these things the day of reckoning in the form of capital expenditure on a large scale was imminent, when the war supervened with all the incalculable additions to poverty that it must entail. And all this at a time when the prosperity due to the opening out of new countries had long passed its maximum. The opportunities of continued expansion are strictly limited by the areas which might be but are not at present cultivated. The possibilities that were opened up a century ago are now well-nigh exhausted. Our accumulated debt remains unpaid, science promises us no startling developments in transport or production for the immediate future, the war has dislocated and destroyed the work of generations—and yet our standard of population remains almost unchanged. Not till low birth-rates are regarded with universal approval can a way be found whereby our threatened difficulty through serious over-population may be overcome.

And, happily, the movement for the control of the birth-rate promises us advantages in other directions.

1. It is the one and only way whereby *women*, apart from those placed in peculiarly fortunate circumstances,

can attain that degree of independence and self-development which is essential to the progress of humanity as a whole.

2. It is the chief method by which the appalling rate of *infant mortality* can be diminished. A comparison of the infant mortality amongst the richer and poorer classes shows conclusively that where the intervals between the appearance of children are sufficient to allow a mother time properly to attend to her family the wastage can almost cease.

3. It is the only way by which parents can attain a sufficient degree of *security* to free them from the ceaseless struggle for a bare existence which a constantly increasing family brings in its train. Thereby a proper education of the younger generation would be rendered possible, the numbers of those living on the verge of starvation with its temptation to crime and prostitution would be diminished, and the depression of wages to the level of bare subsistence, by the competition for employment of unorganized workers, would be minimized.

4. The modern regulation of the birth-rate involves a very important part of the *prophylaxis* against venereal disease. It is astonishing that the recent Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases carefully avoided this most vital aspect of the subject, except for two rather veiled references. As *The Hospital* remarked *a propos* of germicidal prophylaxis (see *Edinburgh Review*, April, 1916): "It is noteworthy that absolute silence is main-

tained concerning those modern methods of prophylaxis which have proved to be of such high efficiency in the American Navy and elsewhere abroad. It almost seems as if the Commission, which cannot be ignorant of these important additions to scientific knowledge, had 'funked' the whole subject; at any rate the omission is both serious and regrettable."

[This is a point on which great stress should be laid in our propaganda. And those who are genuinely distressed about the wide prevalence of venereal disease in and outside of marriage should be strong supporters of birth-control. For many of the modern measures of birth-control are at the same time excellent venereal prophylactics.

The effect of the use of modern contraceptives in diminishing venereal disease as well as abortion can be noticed not only in prostitutes, but in respectable married women as well. The prostitute of former years had frequently to subject herself to abortions and was generally venereally diseased. She has now become an expert in the use of contraceptive measures and she avoids both. And in married women who are using contraceptives venereal disease is practically unknown. As I stated in another place, our granting or not granting permission to a couple to marry, when one or both partners had been sufferers from venereal disease, greatly depends upon whether they are anxious to have children at once, or are willing to use contraceptives for a certain

period. In the first case we are often obliged to refuse our permission. In the second we generally grant it, and we have never yet known a case where venereal infection took place. Those who claim to be interested in the diminution of venereal disease and are opponents of the spread of contraceptive knowledge are either inconsistent or hypocrites.—W. J. R.]

5. Regulation of population is the most effective way of ensuring the cessation of war. An undue fecundity promotes international pugnacity of precisely the kind which was operative in bringing about the present war.

(a) The feeling of expansion when brought up against geographical barriers acts blindly in the direction of conflict, whether in colonial rivalry or territorial "swarming."

(b) The lowering of social conditions due to overpopulation makes people long for a change of any kind, and at any price. They may not consciously desire war, but their resistance to the powerful interests which flourish on war is weakened in a dangerous degree.

And to all the advantages which would accrue to any given nation, only one argument worth considering is ever opposed, namely, that the maintenance of a high birth-rate is a military necessity since other nations will not adopt the same policy. In every belligerent nation to-day, whatever its alliances or position, this objection

is urged by the reactionaries within that nation. In England all attention is concentrated on Germany with the assumption that Germany is unaffected by a similar movement. Hence a careful examination of the condition of public opinion in Germany is one of the most vital needs of the present situation.

Such a study is all the more necessary at the present time, because public interest has been aroused by the appearance of the report of the so-called "National Commission" of Inquiry into the Declining Birth-rate—*The Declining Birth-Rate*, its Causes and Effects (Chapman & Hall, 10/6 net)—which, though it claims to be exhaustive, is lamentably deficient in three important respects. Not only was no evidence taken with regard to the attitude of Germany on which the European situation so largely depends, but in a question whose social bearing is chiefly on problems of economics and the position of women, not one single recognized economist or one single feminist was either placed on the Commission or asked to give evidence! In spite of this the Commission, which contained no less than ten clerics out of an active membership of about twenty, has claimed that its Inquiry is "exhaustive" and "authoritative," and the public is only too likely to accept its findings on this valuation. While, therefore, acknowledging the interest of the material the Commission has collected, the present writer offers no excuse for emphasizing the importance of the somewhat different conclusions reached in the fol-

lowing pages, where an endeavor is made to fill the blanks left by the Commission as regards

(i.) The standpoint of women,

(ii.) The economic argument, with special reference to Malthus,

(iii.) The position of Germany.

In order to avoid covering ground already familiar to English readers, it has seemed best to present data derived as far as possible from the Central Empires on the significance of whose attitude to this question for the future of international relation we have already dwelt.

I.

THE EARLY STAGES.

In the Dark and Middle Ages Germany, like the rest of Europe, had to rely largely on infant mortality [1] to keep its population within bounds; 12, 15, or even 20 children were quite in order even in the upper classes, but only one or two in a dozen survived to maturity! K. v. Jnama-Sternegg proves that in the 8th and 9th century only 2.5 children per family came safely through the ordeal of childhood; and Bücher showed that of 53 children in 9 branches of a prominent Frankfort family, 35 died before their father. In the lower classes the mortality was even more appalling, and in spite of the tremendously high birth-rate, in Nürnberg, for example, less than 2 children per burgher was the rule in 1449.[2] Prinzing gives evidence to show that about 75% of all

[1] Deliberate infanticide was, of course, the method adopted in earlier centuries.

[2] Hanauer, J. Article on Social Hygiene in the Middle Ages in the *Handwörterbuch der sozialen Hygiene,* Leipzig, 1912.

children born in these stirring times failed to reach maturity. Incessant warfare, typhoid and so forth, as Malthus has established, did the rest; and only in quite modern days have rational methods prevailed against those of nature. Of the early writers who discussed the population problem as formulated by Malthus, the pioneer studies of Hegenroch, Suden and Rau were followed in the thirties by Robert Mohl (*Polizeiwissenschaft*) and in the fifties by Karl Marlow (*Organisation der Arbeit*), Professor at Marburg. Then came the generation of prominent publicists, Roscher, Schäffle, Wagner and Rümelin, who agreed with John Stuart Mill in supporting the views of Malthus and emphasizing their importance. In 1866 von Kirchmann, Vice-President of the Oberlandesgericht at Ratisbon, was deprived of his office for advising the working men of Berlin not to have more than two children.[3] In December, 1872, Mr. Montague Crackanthorpe, K. C., wrote his "explanatory letter" to the *Fortnightly Review;* and the advice which he gave, though inadequate, was shortly afterwards countenanced even by prominent Roman Catholics in Germany.[4] In 1881 Mensinga published his *Facultative Sterilität* under the pseudonym C. Hasse, and the popularization of the knowledge associated with his name gave fresh impetus to the spread of the propaganda.

[3] Stille, *Bevölkerungsfrage,* Berlin, 1889.

[4] Capellmann, *Fakultative Sterilität,* Aachen, 14th thousand, 1897.

Soon afterwards a number of distinguished pathologists and physiologists[5] finally established the fact that the supposed harmfulness of the modern methods was a fable.

[5] v. Krafft-Ebing, Nervosität und neurasthenische Zustände, in Nothagels *Pathologie,* 1895. See Grotjahn *Geburten-Rückgang,* 1914, p. 102—where the medical evidence is clearly stated. On the Continent the able writings of Professor Forel have long familiarized the public with the facts of the case, and the extensive experience of the Dutch physicians, Dr. Aletta Jacobs, of Amsterdam, and Dr. J. Rutgers, of the Hague, has fully confirmed these conclusions. In England and America confusion and ignorance are still curiously prevalent, even in educated circles, as is shown by the recently published evidence of the Birth-Rate Commission. It is regrettable that this body allowed so many conservative and religious witnesses to confuse the issue, or to make entirely unsupported general assertions almost unchallenged (pp. 221, 281, 391, 442), even the evidence of Dr. Routh and Dr. Scharlieb being presented in a most unsatisfactory state, full of uncriticized prejudices, uncertainties and contradictions. Nowhere are the alleged remote psychical effects of prevention under certain conditions properly contrasted with the normal practice of control, or with the terrible evils of constant childbearing, so well indicated in *Maternity, Letters from Working Women* (Bell, 1915). Fortunately, however, the valuable evidence of the distinguished gynecologist, Sir Francis Champneys, is presented fully and clearly, and his unambiguous verdict should go far to settle the doubts of the inquiring reader. On p. 139 (see also pp. 253-4) he says: "I do not think it is true to say that in the majority of cases prevention does affect health directly in a deleterious manner" [entirely too vague and circumlocutional—W. J. R.], and, again, "I have never seen any physical harm done by moderating the number of children," by preventive methods. He carefully states the conditions under which disadvantages might perhaps result, and emphatically pronounces several of the most commonly adopted methods to be as harmless as those authoritatively recommended (p. 226, line 36, and p. 254, line 36).

[For many years I have challenged our medical opponents of birth-control to demonstrate privately or before a medical society a single well-authenticated case of injury from the use of modern contraceptive measures; but nobody has answered the challenge. Cases of serious injury from coitus interruptus or coitus reservatus can be shown by the thousands; every civilized country is full of them; but that is just the method which we ourselves have been condemning for many years with all the influence at our command. Yes, the supposed harmfulness of modern contraceptive measures is a fable; it is worse than a fable; it is, in many instances, a deliberate falsehood.—W. J. R.]

The Bradlaugh episode in England in 1876 was the cause of public attention all over Europe being directed to the question of birth restriction. In Germany the interest thus aroused led to the foundation in 1882 of the Sozialharmonische Verein in Stuttgart, which for the past thirty years has undertaken the work performed by the Malthusian League in England, under the direction of Herr Max Hausmeister. It was supported by copious literature, and in 1889 Ferdy published in Berlin his *Die Mittel zur Verhütung der Konzeption,* which has passed through many editions, and done for Germany something of what the Knowlton pamphlet achieved in this country in the days before the Bradlaugh trial. In 1907 the book was in its 8th edition.

The new century opened with the reprinting from

the *Deutsche Medizinische Wochenschrift* of an essay by Meierhof, giving publicity to the abundant evidence of the rapid spread of prudential knowledge. He refers, for example, to the pamphlet by a cleric of the name of Gebhart, who states that the Thuringian peasantry are so careful as to the size of their families that before long only paupers and wastrels will have large families. And during the past decade the attention of able social reformers has been frequently concentrated on the interesting field thus opened for inquiry. In particular C. Hamburger has made an exhaustive analysis of the fertility of the women of Berlin. While in the richer classes two children is the average, he proved that the number of births in the poorer families averaged five, of whom less than 50% survived to their teens! He based his investigations on over a thousand records of women who had been married more than ten years: and since it is chiefly amongst the younger women that the new knowledge has spread, it is probable that Berlin can now claim to rival Paris even in the success with which it has tackled this most vital problem of a great city.[6]

We may, however, more profitably return to the discussion of such current developments when we come to consider the outlook for the future. But we may note in advance that nearly all the leading exponents of

[6] Felix A. Theilhaber, *Das sterile Berlin*, Berlin, 1913, p. 165, puts the relevant data in an accessible form.

Political Economy in Germany have now felt constrained to express their views on the population question and the overwhelming majority have declared themselves on the side of Malthus. In a word the Decline of the Birth-rate was the question of the hour. Everywhere it was being discussed in print and on the platform with a freedom and in a spirit decidedly disconcerting to the military party. Another few years of peace and . . .

Perhaps the best way to give an idea of the public interest which the question had created immediately previous to the war is to set down the following selection of studies devoted wholly to Birth-control during *four months only* of the year 1914:—

Alexander, C., Der Kampf gegen den Geburtenrückgang. M. Kl. 1914. Nr. 9. S. 397.

Berta, Luigi, Beiträge zum Problem des Neomalthusianismus. Arch. f. Sozialwiss. u. Sozialpolitik 38. H. 2. S. 425-439.

Blaschko, A., Geburtenrückgang und Geschlechtskrankheiten. Leipzig, 1914. Joh. Ambr. Barth. 8°. 42 S. 80 Pf.

Curtius, Die Abnahme der Geburtenziffern im Regierungsbezirk Magdeburg. V. f. gerichtl. Med. 47. 1914. H. 1.

Fernau, H., Zur Bevölkerungsfrage. Eth. Kultur 1914. Nr. 8. S. 59-61.

Fischer, Alfons, Geburtenrückgang und Volksgesundheit. Der Düsseldorfer Monistentag. Leipzig, 1914. Verlag Unesma. S. 51-61. Diskussion. S. 61-67.

Forberger, J., Geburtenrückgang und Konfession. Berlin, 1914. Säemann-Verlag. 8°. 72 S. 1 Mk.

Gottberg, Margarethe v., Berufliche Einflüsse auf die Fruchbarkeit der fortpflanzungsfähigen Bevölkerung. Jb. f. National ökonomie u. Statistik. herausgeg. v. J. Conrad. 102. 3. Folge 47. Marx, 1914. S. 327-336.

Grassl, Der Geburtenrückgang in Deutschland, seine Ursachen und seine Bedeutung. Kempten 1914. J. Kösel. 8°. 166 S. 1 Mk.

" Der Erfolg alter und neuer ehelicher Geschlechtssitten in Bayern. Arch. f. Rassen- u. Gesellschaftsbiologie 10. 1914. H. 5. S. 595-627.

Grotjahn, A., Die Eugenik als Hygiene der Fortpflanzung. Arch. f. Frauenkrkh. 1. 1914. S. 15-18.

Hirsch, M., Fruchtabtreibung und Präventivverkehr im Zusammenhang mit dem Geburtenrückgang. Würzburg, 1914. Kabitzsch. VII. 267 S. 8°. 6 Mk.

Klob, Der Kampf gegen den Geburtenrückgang. Zschr. f. Kriminalpsychol. u. Strafrechtsreform von Asschaffenburg. Heidelberg, 1914. Jg. 10. H. 11-12. S. 715-716.

Kranold, H., Der Geburtenrückgang und die Arbeiterklasse. Neue Generation, 1914. H. 3. S. 126-133.

Langstein, Geburtenrückgang und Säuglingsschutz. Zschr. f. Säuglingsschutz, 1914. S. 14-23.

Linke, Joh., Zum Geburtenrückgange. Arztliches Vereins-Bl. 43. Nr. 954. 1914. S. 40-41.

Libmann, P., Geburtenrückgang und männliche sexuelle Impotenz. Würzburg, 1914. C. Kabitzsch. 8°. 37 S. 1 Mk. 50 Pf.

v. Olshausen, Antikonzeptionelle Mittel und Gesetzgebung. M. Kl. 1914. Nr. 10. S. 439-440.

Stöcker, H., Staatlicher Gebärzwang oder Rassenhygiene? Neue Generation. 1914. H. 3. S. 134-149.

" Geburtenrückgang und Monismus. Der Düsseldorfer Monistentag. 7 Hauptvers. des D. Monistenbundes. Leipzig, 1914. Verlag Unesma. S. 40-51.

Wolf, Julius, Religion und Geburtenrückgang. Arch. f. Rassen- u. Gesellschaftsbiologie, 10. 1914. H. 5. S. 586-594.

II.

THE CONFLICT OF OPINION.

As a result of all this interest in the general position of Malthus there is a vigorous economic controversy at present in progress in which the protagonists are Oppenheimer, Wolf, Dietzel, Pohle, Bernstein, and Budge (Archiv f. S. u. S. 1912, p. 528). This has arisen out of Oppenheimer's challenge *Das Bevölkerungsgesetz* 1901, in which the author claimed, in opposition to the great majority of German economists who have expressed their acceptance of the Malthusian position, to have slain and buried not only Malthus but also his disciples, past, present and future. Oppenheimer sneers at Malthus, whose book, he contends, is as full of contradictions as the Bible, contains no original thought, and is unworthy of scientific consideration. Malthus himself was a weak thinker, a muddle-headed unintelligent plagiarist, lacking all deductive capacity, utterly illogical, and so forth! Coming from an economist of no small repute amongst the younger generation Oppenheimer's remarks naturally attracted considerable attention.

He distinguished three Malthusian theories of population—The theory of Malthus referring to past, present and future (which he interprets in a manner that can by no means be accepted as accurately representing the reverend gentleman's views); the theory of those Malthusian statisticians who fear that over-population is unavoidable and imminent in the near future; and the theory of those Malthusians who fear that in the near future the productive possibilities of industry will be limited by our deficient social organization. Most of his general objections to and interpretations of these theories have been disposed of in a very able book by Dr. Siegfried Budge, *Das Malthus' sche Bevölkerungsgesetz* —an examination of the Malthusian theory as it is treated in the economic literature of the first decade of this century. But more recently Oppenheimer has returned to the fray on two specific points, and since (unlike other opponents) he has not yet been satisfactorily answered in Germany it is worth while to dispose of this last surviving critic in the next four paragraphs which readers who are pressed for time may omit!

Dr. Budge showed that food products have only slightly increased in proportion to the population. But why, asks Oppenheimer, should farmers strive to produce more food than is used? If, he says, foodstuffs per head have not increased more than is actually the case the cause is not that agriculture *could* not provide more but *would* not, because prices were not high enough

to make it seem profitable. And prices were not high enough for the very reason that no more was used than then.

It is clear that Oppenheimer has not had the advantage of perusing the works of Dr. Marshall, or he could not have fallen into this error, so frequently found in German economics, whereby he overlooks the fact that the amount demanded or used is not rigid, but depends on the price of the supply, and that the lower the price the greater the demand. Therefore if a large output of foodstuffs is really so easy to produce, farmers, by lowering the price slightly, might recoup themselves over and over again by their increased number of sales. The question of what could or could not be done is, in economic activity, purely a question of expenses balanced against returns. If farmers *could* produce more it would be to their interest to do so, especially as there is so little trust or monopoly influence in agriculture. The truth of the matter is that little can be done in agricultural industry to cheapen the methods of production by large scale production and the consequent division of labor. Even in the wheat-growing districts of America the average farm is decreasing in area. Hence Oppenheimer's objection is entirely invalid.

Secondly, he contends, in answer to Bernstein and Pohle, "If, as Malthus stated, the inability of the means of subsistence to keep pace with the tendency of population to increase is really a fact, that is to say if the law

of production on land were not compensated for and more than compensated by the increase in coöperation of a denser population—then the proportion of town-dwellers should fall in all growing civilizations and the proportion of agriculturists should be rising.'' Increasing difficulty in raising agricultural produce would be calling for a larger agricultural labor force. But this has not been the case as comparative statistics of urban and rural populations show. Hence the Malthusian contention is disproved.

In this criticism Oppenheimer calmly dismisses or overlooks most of the following facts, some of which his opponents have already brought to his notice. To dwell in the country does not imply an agricultural occupation. A hundred years ago it was the country folk who transported their food products, carried on industries such as weaving, and made their own agricultural machinery. To-day railway transportation and mechanical industry have concentrated their occupations in the towns. Moreover in England to-day, which Dr. Oppenheimer takes as an illustration, one-third of our food is imported, and hence we must add the foreign exporting farmers to our agricultural producers. A third important difference is that the fuel needed for power production used to be the wood produced in the country, now it is the coal mined mainly by town dwellers. These changes having taken place, all statistical comparisons of town and country populations are the reverse of illuminating.

III.

MALTHUS AND MODERN ECONOMICS.

The strange thing is that Oppenheimer, owing to an erroneous imputation to Malthus of the law of diminishing returns, fails to discover the one point in which Malthus is undoubtedly open to criticism! The point is of no little interest for all discussion of the population problem, and it is worth while to consider it in detail since its bearing has so often been misunderstood by those not familiar with the controversy in question.

The true criticism should be stated thus:—Malthus did *not* realize the significance of the law of diminishing returns, viz., that a continued increase in the application of capital and labor to land must ultimately result in a diminution of the extra produce which can be obtained by a given extra amount of capital and labor.[1] In stating that population may multiply in geometrical

[1] Cf. Smart, *Economic Annals of the 19th Century*, p. 457. It is particularly regrettable that even the brief and apologetic references accorded to economic matters by the Birth-Rate Commission

ratio whilst the food supply cannot increase in more than arithmetical ratio, he was curiously careless in neglecting to consider the productive value of the increased population which the food supply was to maintain. He always regards a hypothetical increase in the productivity of land as due to scientific improvements, fertilization, etc. He always, in fact, refers to "melioration" of land. He never fairly considers the labor power of the hypothetical "hands" for whose "mouths" this increased productivity would cater. It is clear that had he considered this added labor power he could not have implied, in setting forth the ratios of increase,

Population,	2	4	8	16	32	64	128
Food,	2	4	6	8	10	12	14

that an increment of 128 workers in a fifth generation would necessarily have a total productive value equal only to that of an increment of two workers five generations previously. In fact, he does not himself advance any *proof* that the increased number of mouths would *not* imply a *sufficiently* increased number of hands to assist a food supply, advancing by improvements and developments in arithmetical progression, to become ca-

are marred by an obvious neglect of the fact of diminishing returns. The same neglect as his critics have pointed out unfortunately also characterizes much of the suggestive economic writings of Mr. J. A. Hobson, whose conclusions the Report itself embodies, in spite of the fact that, particularly as regards Malthus (Report, p. 40), they are in conflict with the masterly exposition by Pierson (*Principles of Economics,* Vol. II, p. 140).

pable of providing subsistence for an indefinite increase of population.

This is the objection so fully substantiated by Professor Cannan in his *Theories of Production and Distribution.* And the proof required can only be furnished by a recognition of the Law of Diminishing Returns. About this law Malthus has nothing to say in his *Essay,* though he makes sundry isolated references to the fact of diminishing returns (which was clearly explained by Sir Edward West in 1814) in his subsequent writings.[2]

[2] It is very important in discussing the law of Diminishing Returns to recognize that it is not a statement of an historical event. For this reason economists often introduce the law by the words "at any given time." The decrease in produce is not a decrease over a series of years, but one in relation to the increase in the doses of capital and labor. The fact on which Mr. Hobson and others lay stress, that the wealth per head in England has increased during the past half century, is no confutation of the law of Diminishing Returns, nor incidentally does it show that we are not "overpopulated," if the prevalence of a low standard of existence be the test. Secondly, care must be taken to specify to which factor the diminishing return ensues, capital or labor; moreover, we cannot talk of even labor as one factor—there are classes of labor, casual, unskilled, and professional, any of which may be overpopulated. Thus, when Professor Cannan (*Wealth,* p. 69) says that population may be increased, so long as addition yields a more than "proportionate return," he has not made it clear to what factor increasing returns accrue. He seems to be thinking subconsciously of the return to the manufacturer's capital. When population is increasing the returns to capital certainly may increase, but only on the condition that the additional laborers available are paid at the same rate as before or a lower rate; and this wage will not necessarily be sufficient to ensure an adequate subsistence.

There is, in fact, nothing to prevent the productivity of land increasing in a comparatively low geometrical progression, as, indeed, it frequently has done. Moreover, it is not true to say that Malthus himself laid no stress on his ratios. He was a mathematician of the first rank, and was 9th Wrangler in 1788, in spite of his outside interests; and not at all the sort of man to use such a conception for popular illustration only.

On the other hand it is equally untrue to assert that the admission of this error makes any difference to the essentials of the position that Malthus was the first to establish through his insistence on the effect *in combination* of rates of increase of population and subsistence respectively, viz., the fundamental social importance of the Population problem in all ages. It was he who first clearly realized the fact that there is a constant tendency for population to press upon the means of subsistence, and the necessity for constant checks on population, whether "positive" or "preventive" in the senses carefully distinguished in the later edition of the *Essay*.

The recognition of this tendency is one of the essentials of modern economics, and it is to be reëstablished as Mr. Sargant Florence and Mr. Henderson have fully proved (*Cambridge Magazine*, January 15 and March 4, 1916), by substituting an exposition of the law of Diminishing Returns for the mistaken hypothesis of an arithmetical ratio which Malthus adopted.

With this rectification the Malthusian Theory, so far from having been refuted, is established more firmly than in the days when it was first accepted as a truism in economics. Rightly understood, indeed, its significance has never been lost sight of by writers who have read beyond the first chapter in which this modification is necessary, though the public, the politicians, and the press are still ignorant of its vital importance for to-day.

The essential features of the population question as it appears to modern economists are therefore briefly as follows:—

(1) Every species of plant and animal has the power to multiply faster than its means of subsistence will permit.

(2) The physiological power of human increase is also so great that if it should operate without restraints of any kind, it would carry population to such limits that vice or misery, or both, would begin to thin out the people, and thus operate as a check upon further increase.

(3) Owing to the law of diminishing returns, a larger number of people cannot, in any given state of civilization and the industrial arts, be so well provided for as a smaller number.

(4) There is a strong natural instinct which inclines the members of our species to the multiplication of numbers, and unless this is counteracted by other motives, it will lead to an increase of population beyond the limits where comfortable subsistence is possible.

(5) This natural instinct is, however, opposed and held in check by several contrary motives, not the least important of which is the desire for the customary goods to consume, coupled with the perception on the part of each head, or would-be head, of a family

that a larger number of children means a smaller share of the necessaries, comforts, and luxuries of life for each one.

(6) How rigidly the increase of numbers is held in check by this motive depends upon the ideas of the people as to what is essential, in the way of incomes, to their happiness,—in other words, upon their standard of living.

This in fact is actually the law of population which Professor T. N. Carver in his brilliant study, *The Distribution of Wealth,* describes (p. 168) as "first systematically worked out by Malthus and never successfully refuted."

Dr. Alfred Marshall's agreement with the fundamentals of the doctrine of Malthus is too well known to require citation, and Dr. Marshall's distinguished pupil, Professor Flux (*Principles,* Chapter I.) treats the Law of Population as an axiom of Economics.

The late Prime Minister of Holland, Dr. N. G. Pierson, in his *Principles of Economics* (1912), Vol. II., pp. 100-170, is unrivaled as an exponent of the Malthusian doctrine of population, and deals severely with the misunderstandings of its leading critics in modern times.

"It is clear," writes Professor Taussig, of Harvard, "that restraint on the increase of numbers is one essential condition of improvement. Stated in this way the Malthusian position is impregnable."

The latest investigation, *Population, a Study in Malthusianism,* by Dr. Warren Thompson, of the University of Michigan (Columbia University Press, 1915), makes

this striking statement:—"The conditions which made possible the unprecedented expansion of the European peoples in the last fifty years are passing away"—and as regards the resources of the New World which are so often dangled before the eyes of the Old, he adds, "Fertile land is no longer to be had for the asking in the United States, and will soon be taken up in the other places where Europeans can thrive (p. 130)." Malthus, he concludes (p. 162), was essentially correct in his statement of the law of population, and "was also correct when he said that much misery and suffering were due to the overcrowding of the population, and that consequently a large number of people were always in want."

And finally, most striking of all, we have the verdict of Professor Cannan himself, which will come as a shock to those who have assumed on the strength of the passage referred to above that this very able critic is in disagreement with the conclusions of Malthus. Commenting on the views of Dr. Warren Thompson, which we have quoted, he says (*Economic Journal,* June, 1916, p. 219), and let us italicize his words:—

"I should like to suggest that the next Bishop who proposes to recommend unreasoning multiplication as a universal rule of human conduct should take this passage from Dr. Thompson's book as his text. . . . This little planet is getting filled up; if we go on increasing our numbers indefinitely we must eventually make it too full,

in spite of that steady progress in material equipment and knowledge which tends to set the limits of desirable density farther on."

It only remains to add that Malthus wrote in an age which knew of no "preventive," as opposed to "positive" checks—to adopt his own terminology—to the increase of population, except either late marriage or the use of abortifacients. The latter Malthus rightly condemned *in toto* (Book IV., Chapter ii., where he refers to "improper arts"); and since it is only in quite recent times that it has become possible to escape from an alternative that led him to a somewhat pessimistic view of social progress, he cannot be fairly reproached for an omission which, of course, in no way invalidates his economic theory.

In addition to the criticisms of reputable economists who have gone astray, it is desirable also to dispose effectively of the more popular opponents of the doctrine whose arguments go down in political circles and are periodically reproduced in the press. In England, where Dr. Drysdale and others have consistently met each such fallacy as it was promulgated, we have witnessed the astonishing vogue of the misguided eloquence of Henry George, who went out of his way to mar a very convincing appeal for the taxation of land values by what he conceived to be a refutation of the law of population. A typical repetition of Henry George's superficialities in this connection appears in *Land Values,* August, 1916,

p. 56. And in Germany, too, there has been not a little unintelligent opposition on somewhat similar lines to the statement of Malthus that there is a tendency for the growth of population to outrun the increase in the means of subsistence from writers of hardly less influence than Oppenheimer. This opposition arises first from a misunderstanding of the meaning of the verb tend, and secondly from a strange lack of imagination in picturing over-population. Rudolf Goldscheid, for instance (who represents an important movement in revisionist socialism, and whose books *Höherentwicklung und Menschenökonomie, Zur Ethik des Gesamtwillens, Grundlinien zu einer Kritik der Willenskraft, Entwicklungswerttheorie,* etc., have won him a justly high position in the eyes of a large and thoughtful public), in his onslaught on "Malthusianismus" seems to take tendency in every possible sense except the dictionary one. He seems unaware that the words "There is a tendency" do not mean "It is a fact that" or "It will be a fact that." What tendency does mean may be illustrated from the study of cross-channel navigation. There is a tendency for the Dover-Calais steam packet to take 70 minutes. This need not mean that on the average the said steam packet does take 70 minutes, nor yet that it will ever take exactly 70 minutes. What it does mean is that certain conditions of tide and weather being given, the horse-power of the engines pitted against the ordinary resistance of the water will result in a speed of so many

knots per hour and consequently a transit of so many minutes. The horse-power exerted and the resistance of water are *constant* factors, wind and waves *inconstant;* and a tendency is the result of certain constant factors when we neglect the inconstant for the moment.

Over-population to the man in the street no doubt suggests a world as narrow and crowded as the street he is usually in; and though this conception may be repudiated by publicists, the notion they generally adopt in its place is no less crude. Rudolf Goldscheid looks for men dying suddenly of a sort of Malthusian disease; till then he refuses to see over-population. Yet on the very same page he writes of social evils; the very evils that are the way that over-population takes effect, the "modus operandi" of over-population. A doctor might just as well pronounce that a man's lungs were in splendid condition but that he was suffering terribly and unaccountably from phthisis. Over-population is a relation between the number of men and amount of wealth. It is the existence of such a number of men in the world or within any country or class that their total wealth is insufficient to maintain them at any given standard of living. Therefore the class and standard must be given. Thus we must say, *e. g.*, the English working-class is over-populated for a standard of a family income of £2 a week. Hence over-population is not going to appear melodramatically, with a flourish of trumpets,

but judged by any ordinary criterion is taking place here and now in slum and village.

Summing up their case the popular opposition to Malthus is expressed thus: "We see no over-population now, and there is no more likelihood of over-population in the future." Writers like Goldscheid appeal to natural science, and show that food being like man, mainly organic, should increase at exactly the same rate as man. This is perfectly true—but it proves precisely the opposite of what Goldscheid desires. For plants and animals allowed to breed without human regulation tend no less than man to outrun their means of subsistence and to die or live half-starved. The only difference between the two species of organic life is that man is conscious of some misfit, and of his misery, and reasons, unfortunately often quite inadequately, about its causes. One may summarize this side of the matter as follows:—

A. 1. There is a constant tendency in animals and plants to increase in geometrical proportion, *e. g.*, as 2, 4, 8, 16, etc.

2. There is no corresponding tendency toward an increase of the ground that favors the growth of animals and plants.

3. Some animals and plants are therefore constantly dying or half-starved.

B. 1. There is a constant tendency for man to increase in geometrical proportion.

2. There is no corresponding *actual* increase in the plants and animals that serve him for food (see A 3).

3. Actually, therefore, men cannot increase in geometrical ratio; some of them are constantly dying or else half-starved, diseased and living in poverty.

IV.

PROGRESS IN THE UNITED STATES.

Those who regard over-population as something static, and look for some Malthusian disease which will not show itself till folk stand so thick on the surface of the globe that there is no breathing space for another baby, will probably be surprised to learn that it is precisely in the New World, with its alleged limitless resources, that advocacy of family limitation is now making the greatest headway. As the *New Republic,* one of the most influential of American weeklies, said recently, "The time is at hand when men and women must denounce it as a conspiracy by the superstitious against the race, when public opinion must compel the amendment of laws which make it a criminal offense to teach people how to control their fertility. Harmless methods of preventing conception are known. The declining birth-rate shows that they are in use by the upper classes of all countries, including the United States. They are widely distributed in Europe and Australia. In Holland the society which instructs the poorer classes

through the agency of medical men and midwives has had the approval of ministers of state, and has since 1895 been recognized by royal decree as a society of public utility. Yet Holland has not been going to the dogs. The death-rate and infantile mortality have been falling rapidly, the excess of births over deaths is increasing, and according to the recent Eugenics congress, the stature of the Dutch people has improved more rapidly than that of any other country.'' The article continued as follows:—

But what so many of the well-to-do and the educated practice the poor are prevented from learning. The law in effect insists that where conditions are worst, breeding shall be most unregulated, that those who can care for children least shall stagger under a succession of pregnancies, that the race shall be replenished by ignorance and accident, that the diseased, the weak-minded, the incompetent, shall by law be compelled to fill the world with horror. Men and women pay for it. They pay for it by a high infant mortality, that monument of tragic waste. They pay for it by the multiplication of the unfit, the production of a horde of unwanted souls. They pay for it in the health of women, the neglect of children, and the fierce burden of destitution. They pay for it in late marriages, and their complement of prostitution and disease, in the wide-spread practice of abortion, in illegitimate births, in desertions and adulteries. There is no one of these miseries which cannot be largely reduced by the extension to all classes of inventions already the property of the educated.

What are the objections to the use of a knowledge which is defended by so few and practiced by so many? The root of them is the tendency to shudder at anything which seems to interfere

with God's plan. Added to it is the theory that sex is sin, that whatever reduces its terror increases its joy. In this scheme of things the child is a threat against unchastity, a punishment, as they say, for "getting caught." It is the view of life which makes men fight prophylaxis as an inducement to immorality, which terrorizes the unmarried mother, and insists the wages of sin shall be expiated in the death of infants, in thwarted childhood, in hospitals, insane asylums, and prisons.

But the clean good sense of mankind is through with that black inversion, and wherever intelligent people meet, the doctrine is accepted that the child shall not be considered the punishment of sin but the vessel of the future. All decency to-day insists that no one shall be born until there is a home anxious to receive him, that nothing is to be gained by the bearing of undesired and unforeseen children. . . .

Among reasoning people the argument from superstition is no longer heard, and the supposed injury to health is urged less and less. The ground of the discussion to-day is moral. It is said that if sexual intercourse is severed from child-bearing, a great increase of promiscuity will result. Reduced to accurate terms, it is believed that more unmarried women will have sexual relations. On this ground the existing law is defended. But what is the actual situation? The fact that contraceptives are not widely known is the greatest cause of late marriages, because it is the cost of children which makes men postpone their marriages. This leaves an increasing population of unmarried men and women. The great majority of men live an illicit sexual life with the minority of women who are prostitutes. The other women remain abstinent or they take a lover and either bear an illegitimate child or undergo an abortion. The use of contraceptives would undoubtedly diminish the real evils of illegitimacy and abortion. . . . After all, ignorance can be enforced only upon those wives of the poor who suffer from it most. The young woman of the middle

class who really wishes to know can find out,[1] but it is the poor and the illiterate who need to know and cannot find out. It is the business of society to enlighten them, to allow physicians and district nurses and mothers' clubs to spread the needed information. It should not be necessary for brave women like Mrs. Sanger to risk their liberty. The knowledge need not be published in the newspapers. It should be circulated quietly and effectively. What society cannot afford to do is to enforce the ignorance because of a timidity about the potentially unchaste. A mature community would trust its unmarried women, knowing that the evil of unchastity is greatly exaggerated. Our society does not seem to have attained such self-confidence; it still seems to regard virginity and not child-life as the great pre-occupation of the State.

It has been claimed that the knowledge of how to limit births is the most immediate practical step that can be taken to increase human happiness. The relief which it would bring to the poor is literally incalculable. The assistance it would lend all effort to end destitution and fight poverty is enormous. And to the mind of man it would mean a release from terror, and the adoption openly and frankly of the civilized creed that man must make himself the master of his fate, instead of natural selection and accident, human selection and reason; instead of a morality which is fear of punishment, a morality which is the making of a finer race. Fewer children and better ones is the only policy a modern state can afford. If there are fewer children there will be better ones. A nation must care for its young if they are precious. It cannot waste them in peace or war with that insane prodigality which is characteristic of the great spawning and dying nations where the birth-rate and the death-rate are both exorbitant, where men breed to perish.

[1] This statement is certainly far from true of England, quite apart from ignorance that there is anything to know. Lady doctors and even medical men are often amazingly ignorant of the facts.

To this statement of the case, which was supported with no less ability in the columns of *The Masses,* there could be no answer. It came at a moment when America was faced by the issue which in England was settled once and for all by the Bradlaugh trial. The prosecution of Margaret Sanger here referred to threatened to repeat in the New World what this country experienced in the seventies. But English experience had not been in vain and largely owing to the efforts of Dr. Marie C. Stopes the following letter was addressed to President Wilson bearing her signature together with those of Miss Lena Ashwell, Dr. Percy Ames, Mr. William Archer, Mr. Arnold Bennett, Mr. Edward Carpenter, Mr. Aylmer Maude, Professor Gilbert Murray and Mr. H. G. Wells:

"We understand that Mrs. Margaret Sanger is in danger of criminal prosecution for circulating a pamphlet on birth problems. We therefore beg to draw your attention to the fact that such work as that of Mrs. Sanger receives appreciation and circulation in every civilized country except the United States of America, where it is still counted as a criminal offense.

"We in England passed, a generation ago, through the phase of prohibiting the expressions of serious and disinterested opinion, on a subject of such grave importance to humanity, and in our view to suppress any such treatment of vital subjects is detrimental to human progress.

"Hence, not only for the benefit of Mrs. Sanger, but of humanity, we respectfully beg you to exert your powerful influence in the interests of free speech and the betterment of the race."

This letter was widely reproduced in the American press, and the authorities shortly afterwards dropped all action against Mrs. Sanger. Subsequent attempts at repression have indeed been made, *e. g.*, in New York during the summer of 1916, but as a result of this episode there will soon be no one in the U. S. A. who is not in possession of the information objected to. Mrs. Sanger has herself sent out over 100,000 fresh copies of her suppressed pamphlet, and in every great city in U. S. A. it has been reprinted and further circulated. Three New York reprints alone accounted for 30,000 additional copies, and a mass meeting on the subject in the Carnegie Hall was packed from floor to ceiling. The victory has been won, and in a few weeks America has achieved what England after forty years of slow up-hill labor has not yet accomplished.

[For the sake of historical accuracy a few remarks may not be out of place. For at least ten years before Mrs. Sanger began her beneficent activity, the ground was thoroughly prepared for birth-control ideas, and tens of thousands of leaflets giving specific information were sent out annually.

Mass meetings do not mean victory. It is easy to pack a hall for almost any cause, just as it is easy to get an audience in Hyde Park on a Sunday afternoon. The authorities are but little disturbed. Distance lends charm and we are always apt to imagine that things are better in countries far away, where we are not. The

author says: "In a few weeks America has achieved what England after forty years of slow up-hill labor has not yet accomplished." I wish it were so. Alas, it is not. Quite the contrary is the case. In England one can send by mail specific information about the prevention of conception to married people and those about to get married. We cannot do it in this country. A penalty of five years at hard labor and $5,000 fine still threatens the offender as it did ten or twenty years ago. And the imparting of birth-control information is still considered an act of obscenity, and is still put on exactly the same plane as abortion. It is true that the Federal Government would, at the present time, probably be easy with one caught in the heinous crime of sending contraceptive information by mail; but that is due chiefly to the fact that for the first time since Lincoln we have in the White House a man truly broad-minded, liberal and in touch with the people. There can be little doubt that under the régime of a man of the type of Roosevelt or Hughes—whose election at the present time would have been a great calamity and for whose defeat all true liberals are genuinely grateful—the aggressive advocates of birth-control, particularly the disseminators of practical information, would fare very badly.

The imparting of information orally or by hand-to-hand circulars is outside of Federal jurisdiction. They constitute State offenses, and in such cases we are at

the mercy of the good-will or intelligence of our local judges. A liberal judge will dismiss the case, or impose a nominal fine; a cruel medieval judge will sentence the offender to several years in prison, as was recently done by a judge in Boston.

And as I write these lines, word comes from Cleveland, O., that Dr. Ben Reitman, Emma Goldman's co-worker, after being tried by a jury, was found guilty and sentenced by an ignorant judge to six months in prison and a fine of one thousand dollars—the maximum penalty in Ohio. Dr. Reitman's crime consisted in distributing some leaflets containing practical information on the prevention of conception. I might add here that Emma Goldman and her group have been doing very efficient work in spreading birth-control information, both theoretical and practical.

And to-day, February 6th, as this book goes to press, Mrs. Sanger herself is being transported to Blackwell's Island to serve a sentence, imposed upon her yesterday, of thirty days in the workhouse; while her sister, Mrs. Ethel Byrne, is at home sick, recovering from the effects of an eleven-days hunger strike. She had also been sentenced to thirty days in the workhouse, but her dangerous physical condition and the interference of influential friends forced the Governor to pardon her.

No, the victory has not been won yet, but we are marching towards it.—W. J. R.]

V.

OFFICIAL ALARM IN GERMANY.

Such being the experience even of the New World it is not surprising that the country which more than all others in the Old has peopled the United States with its superfluous citizens should itself have had recourse to this very same remedy for the evils of over-population. During February, 1916, there was a full debate in the Prussian Diet on the reduction of the birth-rate. The Minister of the Interior, von Loebell, declared that the matter was one of vital importance, and that the war had made it of even greater importance for the future. "Measures for raising the number of births must be earnestly considered, war against sexual disease, the care of infants, etc. And in general there must be an earnest appeal to all classes, especially the upper classes of the nation." Interesting statistics were quoted. "Our birth-rate reached its highest level in 1876, viz., 40.9 to every 1,000 inhabitants. By 1912 it had sunk to 28.2." In 1910 the rate was 30.7 for Ger-

many, compared with 19.6 for France and 25 for England. In the same year the excess of births over deaths was 13.6 for Germany compared with 7.6 for France and 11.6 for England. "In this war," he declared, "the decline in births will not injure us; and before the next, which I pray may be far from us, we shall have overcome the present danger,"—the danger involved in a decline of population.

Most of the speakers laid the chief blame on the unwillingness of women, especially in the upper classes, to bear so many children as before. One deputy said "the fact that it is precisely since 1900 that the birth-rate has fallen so much shows that industrial conditions cannot be the cause; 1900 and the years that followed were years of industrial expansion. We are in grave risk of approaching the English and French condition, and must be careful not to let ourselves sink to the 'level' of those two states."

The most instructive speech of the debate was, however, that of the Government representative, Krohne, which the Vienna *Arbeiter Zeitung* of February 27 rightly singles out for reproduction *in extenso.*

"The decreasing birth-rate has caused us serious anxiety already before the war. Since the war it has come to the fore still more. In the middle of the last century the number of births (excluding still-born) varied between 40–35 per 1,000 inhabitants. Since the beginning of this century there was a considerable decline of the birth-rate, which brought it in 12 years from 35 to 27 per 1,000

inhabitants. The circumstances accompanying this decline are especially distressing. Since the beginning of this century the fall was three times as quick as in the previous 25 years. No civilized people has experienced up till now such a rapid fall of the birth-rate in such a short time. For a similar decline, France, which has a lower standard, took seventy, we only twelve years. We have to-day 560,000 less births than we ought to have, had the 1900 birth-rate been kept. This means that we might have had two and a half million more inhabitants than we have; *i.e.*, nearly 71 million instead of 68 millions. This would be an inestimable benefit to us considering the terrible sacrifices of this war. It has been said that we need not be anxious as we have a very favorable death-rate; and it is certainly true that, owing to the economic progress and generally favorable conditions of life, as well as hygienic measures on a vast scale, the death-rate has fallen considerably. The death-rate was 26 per 1,000 inhabitants 30 years ago; it is 14 per 1,000 to-day; *i.e.*, 700,000 less deaths in Germany than if we still had the 1886 death-rate. But this only means a postponement, not an abolition of the threatening danger.

Opinions as to the cause of this undesirable state of affairs vary. A deterioration of the race has been held responsible for it in the first instance. In spite of some indications of weakness, this opinion is not tenable. [The speaker then enumerated and dismissed the other absurdities which figure in public discussions and in the press as causes of the decline in the birth-rate. He proceeded to the real reason.] But the true reason for the declining birth-rate is that a certain view of life is gaining ground, which considers marriage and children from a different standpoint, sees in children a burden with all kinds of unpleasant responsibilities. Unfortunately, this view has gained followers amongst the German women, of whom many wish to have few or no children at all. These women, in refusing to rear strong and able children, to continue the race, drag into the dust that which is the highest end

of women—motherhood. It is to be hoped that the willingness to bring sacrifices will lead to a change for the better. The sale of means to prevent conception has become a public scandal. The most remote corners are visited by travelers for the manufacturers of these articles—even female travelers. Though, of course, statistical data for the destruction of germinating life [*sic*][1] are not available, it is a question of great numbers.

Already Tacitus speaks of the restriction of children amongst the ancient Germans as a serious mistake. The phenomenon of an increase in the birth-rate after war, as has been noticed in former wars, must not be counted upon to counter-balance the terrible losses of this world war, unique in history. Many thousands of young men are eliminated for some years. But we will make good this loss, if we recognize the danger. We need an increase in human beings to guard against attacks of envious neighbors as well as to fulfill our cultural mission. Our whole economic development depends on increase of our people. . . .''

The middle-class newspapers proceeded to take up the cry thus raised, ''Central Europe needs children, children!'' Naumann's watchword in his famous book is quoted with enthusiasm,[2] ''That is the indispensable condition both for military and industrial success.''

Official figures are quoted[3] for Prussia in 1914—1,202,528 births and 802,776 deaths, an excess of 399,752

[1] All over the world opponents of the preventives mentioned endeavor to create the impression that destruction of life is involved in their use. The suggestion is, of course, the result of gross ignorance of the very rudiments of physiology; but here the speaker could make the defense that he had passed on to the consideration of abortion.

[2] *Berliner Tageblatt,* March 9.

[3] *Ibid.,* March 11.

births, as against an excess of 492,474 in 1911. The highest birth-rate known for Prussia was in 1821: "an excess of births at the rate of 19.1 per thousand. . . . This sank towards the middle of last century, then rose again, and in 1898 reached a second climax, 16.7; but from that time forward a decline has set in."

At first sight, in fact, the casual reader might imagine that no one either in Germany or Austria considers the lessening birth-rate as anything but a misfortune. At a largely attended meeting in Austria[4] it was agreed that "the necessity of guarding against a falling birth-rate was recognized in every quarter by the representatives of every class of opinion." Under the leadership of Geheimer Regierungs-Rat Professor Dr. Julius Wolf, a "Deutsche Gesellschaft für Bevolkerungs politik" has recently been founded, and met in Berlin on the 18th of November, 1915.[5] Prof. Wolf pointed out to a huge audience that the increase in the Russian population was yearly between 3,000,000 or 4,000,000; that of Germany scarcely 800,000. The future was painted in dark colors, for Wolf further drew attention to the fact that the vast numbers of men killed and disabled in the war must be subtracted from the present list of effectives, while the entry of women into trades would certainly

[4] *Neue Freie Presse,* March 13.

[5] The writer is indebted to the courtesy of the Librarian of the Lister Institute, Chelsea, for the opportunity of consulting the periodicals on whose reports the summary of this important meeting is based.

not assist to reëstablish the old rate. The Professor's own remedy was "earlier marriages!" [The average age of men at marriage in Prussia is 29, of women 25-26.] Girls, he thought, must receive domestic training in school. Motherhood must be endowed.

Of the speakers who followed this vigorous lead, General von Blume emphasized the military point of view, Geheimrat Stöter the need for assistance from doctors. A religious lady, Frl. Anna Müller, thought women would coöperate. Freiherr von Zedlitz believed that the appeal must have a patriotic basis. Then came Naumann, the author of *Mittel-Europa*. He regretted that in the civil service where there is most economic security for the parents the birth-rate is lowest of all. He wisely pointed out that the actual means for preventing conception are the greatest safeguard against venereal diseases [6] and, like Professor Wolf, found the remedy for the decline not in repressive measures, but along positive lines—viz., Taxation according to size of family. Hartmann, on behalf of the Trade Unions, emphasized the need for social reform if the workers were to be induced to help. Basserman (leader of the National Liberals) objected to the sale of contraceptives in spite of the point made by Naumann, to which Geheimrat Neisser again returned; and, finally, came two speakers who

[6] Cf. the able analysis of the dangers of legal repression by Dr. Max Hirsch, *Fruchtabtreiburg und Präventivverkehr* (1914), p. 130 ff.

thought that the best method of procedure was to make the most of the children actually produced—Herr Hofmeier (Würzburg) pointing out that 30% of all illegitimate children fail to survive, and Kabinettsrat Dr. von Behr-Pinnow emphasizing the fact that 8,000,000 children had been lost in their first year since the foundation of the German Empire.

Such is the latest effort of the semi-official busybodies; and it is also worth noting that on February 27, 1915, was founded a "Bund zur Erhaltung und Mehrung der deutschen Volkskraft" under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Emil Abderhalden, which, to judge by a leaflet by v. Haeckers, might easily lend itself to much the same sort of propaganda.

Of Professor Wolf's activities Dr. Alfred Fried has written: "At the first meeting, strong military support was given to the new society. It is madness, the apotheosis of unreason, to wish to breed and care for human beings in order that in the flower of their youth they may be sent in millions to be slaughtered wholesale by machinery. We need no wholesale production of men, have no need of what Goldscheid aptly calls 'the unfruitful fertility' of woman, no need of wholesale wares fattened and dressed for slaughter. What we do need is the careful maintenance of those already born. If the bearing of children is, as the Conservative Deputy, Dr. Heydebrand, says, a moral and religious duty, then it is a much higher duty to guarantee the sacredness and

security of human life, so that children born and bred with trouble and sacrifice may not be offered up in the bloom of youth to a political dogma at the bidding of secret diplomacy. *A sensible population policy can only be carried out through a vigorous anti-war policy.* The current references to the increase of the birth-rate in enemy countries are ridiculous. In future the only enemies are those who refuse to believe in the elimination of war; all others are allies. A population policy based on war and carried on in support of war is a crime against humanity."

VI.

MILITARISM AND THE BIRTH-RATE.

"*And Lot also which went with Abram had flocks and herds and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle.*"—HOLY WRIT.

"*What do you think is at the present moment the greatest of the social problems with which we have to deal? The greatest and most difficult is the lack of employment. What is the reason? The reason is to be found—the principal reason—in the continuous and enormous growth of our population.*"—JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN.

"*Remember this, that between* 300,000 *and* 400,000 *souls are added to our community yearly. Do you imagine that the means of supplying them increases with equal rapidity? There is no ground for believing that it does so. . . . What you want is a good hearty emigration.*"—LORD SALISBURY.

"We have in this country an overflowing population, and we are bound to find for their industrial energy ever fresh and fresh fields and outlets."—SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.

"Can a great and rapidly growing nation like Germany always renounce all claims to further development or to the expansion of its political power? The final settlement with France and England, the expansion of our colonial possessions, in order to create new German homes for the overflow of our population, . . . these are the problems which must be faced in the near future."—"BERLINER POST," 1913.

"Mr. Walter Long (President of the Local Government Board) agreed that they must do everything in their power to recover the birth-rate, as it was never more essential that our great race should expand and cover the globe."—"MANCHESTER GUARDIAN," June 29th, 1916.

"The pressure of population in any country brings as a chief historic consequence overflows and migrations not only for peaceful settlement but for conquest and for the subjugation and exploitation of weaker peoples. This always remains a chief cause of international disputes."—THE DECLINING BIRTH-RATE (NATIONAL COMMISSION'S REPORT), p. 43.

Since the days of Abram and Lot the relations of war and over-population have provided a fruitful theme for

discussion. Since the time of Malthus the statement that War has been one of nature's chief devices for keeping population within limits, has become a truism. The corollary that over-population has been one of the chief inducements to war has not been so frequently developed. "Historians," wrote Huxley, "point to the greed and ambition of rulers, the reckless turbulence of the ruled, to the debasing effects of wealth and luxury, and to the devastating wars which have formed a great part of the occupation of mankind, as the causes of the decay of States and the foundering of old civilizations, and thereby point their story with a moral. But beneath all this superficial turmoil lay the deep-seated impulse given by unlimited multiplication."[1] At last the great "swarming" periods of European races seemed to have come to an end, but ever and anon the expansion of the population of Germany since the Franco-Prussian war has been regarded in the English press as a new menace.

The matter has usually been considered as a fatality by those who referred to it, though as regards the facts there is less agreement. Said Mr. Blatchford in his *Daily Mail* articles four years before the war—"Why should Germany attack Britain? The population of Germany is rapidly increasing. Germany needs colonies; Britain

[1] Similarly Dr. C. E. Woodruff, an enterprising but uncritical militarist, remarks in his *Expansion of Races* (New York, 1909), p. 127, "Curiously enough, the real basis of war—over-population —has not been mentioned by any writers who have ever touched the topic."

has taken all the colonies worth having. Britain holds India, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Egypt, and the most desirable parts of Africa. Germany is hungry for trade and for influence in distant seas; Britain holds fortresses and coaling stations all over the earth."

Almost at the same time a writer in the *Nineteenth Century* (January, 1910) was asking: "Is Germany keenly desirous of annexing new lands? Of course she is. How could she be otherwise with a population of 70 millions, which in time to come will be nigh on 100 millions, confined within narrow limits? . . . Germany must find an outlet for her people."

And since the war came the same view has not infrequently appeared in the English press. Listen to this little sermon in the *Daily Mirror* just four months after the invasion of Belgium:

"A year or two ago, in one of his oratorical reviews of the condition-of-Germany question, the Kaiser is reported to have summed up the situation by remarking that by 1950 Germany would possess a population of a truly hideous figure—say, two hundred millions or near it.

"And therefore?—Well, therefore you would suppose it would be, from that moment, the solemn duty of Germany to imitate the instance of thrifty France, and to bring her birth-rate into line with those of less state-ridden races, so as to spare humanity the misery and disgrace of an ill-considered multiplication that assimilates it to rabbits or flies. . . . Not in the least! The Kaiser's conclusion was, not that the Germans should remember, in this birth-rate business, the common duty of all civilized mortals, but that they

should, by hook or by crook, by bayonet or battleship, possess themselves of such other lands in Europe, or overseas, as might be needed for their natural expansion! . . . It may not be exactly true that Germany was in need of territorial expansion; leave that, for the moment, to experts. It was substantially true, we think, that an impression prevailed there that Germany was 'overpopulated.' . . . A letter in our correspondence column yesterday rightfully put the root fact of an uncontrolled birth-rate, upsetting the European equilibrium, as the one that has led, through whatever subsidiary incidents, to the tragedy from which it will take generations for Europe to recover. Let all birth-rate maniacs think this over before peace is made."

On week days it is the Kaiser's doing. On Sundays democratic sentiments prevail. Said the *Sunday Chronicle* on August 15, 1915: "It is a struggle for existence, and in this struggle people of one nation naturally unite against people of another. . . . Germany had become crowded. . . . The German workman wants for his sons the heritage of the French workman; the German farmer wants for his sons the heritage of the Russian farmer; and the German merchant wants for his sons the heritage of the British merchant."

Now four months earlier when an innocent public was expecting a flood of War Babies, the *Sunday Chronicle* had published an article "From Our Special Commissioner." Our Special Commissioner describes the views of his friends. "Her rapidly increasing population," says the club member, "is Germany's justification for expansion. If we want to smash the Germans and re-

move the Teutonic peril out of our path for ever we must start a new Kultur in Germany. We must spread the gospel according to the Neo-Malthusians. We have enough practitioners thereof to spare a few for propaganda purposes among the Germans as soon as peace is made."

"He was a plausible club member," continues the article, "and I have no doubt that round the fire few were left unconvinced that there was something in what he said. Yet the facts are against him, as I discovered when, my interest piqued by his statements, I set out to check them. As a matter of cold fact, the German people, if decadence is to be measured by the decline of birth-rates, are three times more decadent than we are, for, although the birth-rate is higher than ours by roughly 3 per 1,000 of the population, the decline, which set in considerably later there than here, has been far more rapid."

Such was the strange mixture of journalism and common sense presented to the plain man in these stray signs of grace—and last of all comes the economist, tentatively illuminating as befits his position of dignity. Speaking in Cambridge on May 25, 1916, Dr. J. H. Clapham, of King's College, remarked that suddenly in the early years of the present century German wealth in children began to decline very rapidly. The level was still growing a very little more rapidly than that of the United Kingdom, but the German thinkers began to see

a time when their importance would dwindle simply for lack of men. He had no right to say that diplomacy was influenced by the desire to come in on the top of the wave, but . . .

Here, then, is the suggestion we have to examine. The outstanding feature of the European situation was the startling decline of the German birth-rate *contrary to the desire of the bureaucracy.* The disgruntled militarists plunged accordingly. And let no one think the charge too harsh. Another economist less careful in choosing his words to expose the callous indifference to social suffering of those who favor unlimited multiplication in these days, Professor T. N. Carver, of Harvard University, is justly respected in this country for his brilliant writings on economic theory. "Foxes," he said recently, "think large families among the rabbits highly commendable. Employers who want large supplies of cheap labor, priests who want large numbers of parishioners, military leaders who want plenty of cheap food for gunpowder, and politicians who want plenty of voters, all agree in commending large families and rapid multiplication among the poorer classes."

The Very Rev. Dr. Inge, Dean of St. Paul's, and late Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge, is equally emphatic in singling out the prime movers in this pernicious propaganda to promote "the aggregation of multitudes in large towns, the progressive defacement of our beautiful country, the pres-

sure of a permanent surplus of laborers who cannot obtain work, and the fierce competition which is a necessary concomitant of a dense population." Three classes only, he says, are interested in raising the ridiculous cry of "depopulation"—ridiculous because the births in this country exceed the deaths by about five to three, and even in France the numbers are increasing. "These classes are: Firstly, the militarists, who look upon men as food for powder. Secondly, the capitalists, who desire an unlimited quantity of cheap labor, with a margin which will give them a favorable position in bidding for it. Thirdly, the advocates of cut-throat competition as the means of producing the maximum of industrial efficiency. Our society cannot have the slightest sympathy with any of these ideas." [2]

[2] The *Eugenics Review*, October, 1913.

VII.

THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS.

It might have been supposed that counsels such as these would have found their most vigorous adherents in the ranks of the Social-Democratic party. Many prominent members of this party have, it is true, constantly advocated a restriction of the birth-rate, but since the days of Bebel there has been continuous opposition to such restriction on orthodox Marxian principles.[1] It would have as a result the apparent acquittal of the existing state of society as the source of all misfortune: and further, it is felt that if things are going well with the worker (also an indirect admission that the worker is better off when he has fewer children) he no longer has any interest in the movement. It is forgotten that many of those who are the worst off are too miserable to take an interest in the movement as it is: otherwise

[1] Marx, *Das Kapital,* vol. I, p. 590 ff. Exploded by Soetbeer (1886); and Pierson (*Principles,* II, 141); also by Budge, *op. cit.,* p. 135 ff.

Social-Democracy would long ago have come into its own.

In 1892 Bebel made the following statement in reply to the argument of a Deputy who, in the Reichstag debate on unemployment, thought it would be to the advantage of agriculture if the superfluous workers of the towns could return to the land: "What would be the consequence? The miserable wages which are now being paid in the country would drop still further and the general position of the workers would become worse than it is already." Hereby he admitted the advantage of restricted numbers. Yet in the same year Vollmer wrote (*Die Neue Zeit*, No. 7): "The party, which like the rising tide overflows all barriers, which pours itself over country and town, even into the most reactionary districts, this party stands to-day at the point where it can fix the time with almost arithmetical certainty when it will dominate." And Bebel himself at the sitting of the Reichstag already referred to, ventured on the following prophecy: "The realization of our aims is so near that there are few in this hall who will not live to see the time, *for our party will take possession of the State towards the year* 1898." It is now 25 years since these words were uttered by important leaders. And what about to-day? Moreover the advantage of a restriction of numbers has always been a fundamental tenet of trade-unionism—in Germany no less than elsewhere, as Gaechter [2] has pointed out. "Is it," he asks,

[2] H. Gaechter, *Ende der Armut*, p. 31.

"more advantageous for trades-unions to possess members in fair circumstances or members hard pressed? Think of wages disputes and strikes. Would not the resistance of the individual be greater, would not a society be in a better position to give financial support where it has not so many mouths to feed?" Gaechter goes on to consider the attitude of the trades-union press, which advises parents whose boys are about to enter certain trades not to let their sons become locksmiths, carpenters, bakers, etc., owing to the bad conditions of the workers in the professions in question. The disadvantages of bad trades are so ably exposed that many a father hardly knows what he can safely let his son learn! The same complaints are made in the civil service about the ever-growing pressure, though they have much less to put up with than the industrial workers. The trades-unions, too, recognize the danger of this pressure, and try to counter it by stricter regulations as regards apprenticeship. Yet the official leaders of the Party elect to throw over the fundamentals of restriction on which the whole economic policy of the workers is based. The Social-Democrats have always opposed war, but their leaders have failed to take the advice of the Belgian General Brialmont, who, a few years ago, on the occasion of a University address, explained that there was no other means of obviating wars than the artificial limitation of progeny, and the guarantee of a good income

for each individual citizen which would thereby be rendered possible.

So much for the officials and the theorists of the party with their appeal to the economic theories of Marx and to the needs of the Social-Democratic army in its battle against capitalism. It is these leaders who are so frequently quoted when population questions are discussed in England, by writers who have never studied the matter at first hand, but have gladly availed themselves of the English translation of Bebel's *Woman*, and generalize accordingly. But happily there is little connection between socialist theory and socialist practice. All over Germany the official view is openly scouted, both at meetings and in the press. All observers are agreed that the reduction of the birth-rate is very largely a social-democratic affair. Borntraeger in his important semi-official inquiry into the population problem proves beyond doubt that the decline has been most pronounced in socialistic towns such as Berlin, Crefeld, Solingen; and provinces such as Brandenburg, West Prussia, Posen.[3] And Wolf (*Geburtenrückgang*, p. 101) rightly connects this fact with the emancipation of Social Democracy from religion.

Though the *Münchner Neueste* (July 9, 1912) attempted to prove, and the *Tägliche Rundschau* a few days later to disprove, that Catholic and Protestant countries were the same in respect to variations in the

[3] Cf. Julius Wolf, *Volkswirtschaft*, p. 297.

birth-rate, the evidence of many inquiries[4] does not allow us to say more than that orthodox Catholicism certainly regards facultative sterility the deadliest vice.[5] Moreover, as Professor Cannan (*Economic Journal*, l.c.) puts it, "the local coincidence of high natality and faithfulness to the Church does not prove that Christianity, whether Roman, or Greek, or Protestant, is powerful, but only that the conditions in so-called backward districts are more favorable at once to high natality and faithfulness to the Church than more 'modern' conditions." But wherever, as in modern France, the power of ecclesiasticism has been shattered by the rising democracy (P. Leroy-Beauliéu in *Journal des Debats*, 20th August, 1890, etc.; Arsène Dumont, *Natalité et Democratie*), a tendency definitely favorable to limitation is clearly discernible. It cannot be too strongly emphasized how disastrous has been the influence of the churches in all countries in the matter of population, in spite of a few individual exceptions. The general antagonism of Church and Reform culminated in France in complete disestablishment. Germany has been much influenced by the experience of France in this respect, and a few words may profitably be devoted here to one of the most important features of that experience.

[4] See *e.g.*, Pyszka, *Bergarbeiterbevölkerung*, 1911; Berger, *Zeitschrift für Medizinalbeamte*, 1911, 23; Theilhaber, *Das Sterile Berlin*, 1913, p. 102, etc.

[5] P. Krose, *Einfluss der Konfession auf die Sittlichkeit*, p. 14. Cf. P. v. Hammerstein, *Konfession und Sittlichkeit*, p. 13.

It is no longer the fashion in England to sneer at the so-called decadence of France, and many Englishmen have learnt to realize the true spirit of our Ally for the first time since the outbreak of the war. Indeed many who had been misled by the ignorant references in the English press to the birth-rate during the past quarter of a century (always embellished by the copious lamentations of certain reactionaries in Paris) must have wondered whence came this astonishing vitality, this cheerful invincibility in the face of overwhelming misfortune. The true progress of France, that social progress and independence which resulted from the mitigation of the blind struggle for bread, is only to be explained in one way, and had the evils of the military tradition inherited from Napoleonic times been overcome, France would have been even more clearly the undisputed leader of European civilization.

Consider the following verdict of one of the most penetrating of modern sociological writers:—

" 'A French gentleman, well acquainted with the constitution of his country, told me above eight years since that France increased so rapidly in peace that they must necessarily have a war every twelve or fourteen years to carry off the refuse of the people.' So Thicknesse wrote in 1776, and he seems to have accepted the statement as unimpeachable. Indeed, he lived long enough to see the beginning of the deadliest wars in which France ever engaged. The French were then the most military people in Europe. Now they are the leaders in the great modern civilizing movement of antimilitarism. To what predominant influence are we to attribute

that movement? To Christianity? Most certainly not. To Humanitarianism? There is not the slightest reason to believe it. The ultimate and fundamental ground on which the most civilized nations of to-day are becoming anti-militant, and why France is at the head of them, is—there can be no reasonable doubt—the Decline in the Birth-rate. Men are no longer cheap enough to be used as food for cannon. . . . The people of the nations are growing resolved that they will no longer be treated as 'Refuse.' The real refuse, they are beginning to believe, already ripe for destruction, are those Obscurantists who set their backs to civilization and humanity, and clamor for a return of that ill-fated recklessness in pro-creation from which the world suffered so long, the ancient motto, 'Increase and multiply,'—never meant for use in our modern world,—still clinging so firmly to the dry walls of their ancient skulls that nothing will ever scrape it off."[6]

Or again, let us take the even more emphatic pronouncement of Mr. W. L. George,[7] whose intimate knowledge of France is shared by few in this country. "Small population," he tells us, "makes for personal comfort. The struggle for life is not too intense in France and allows the people to enjoy the good things of this world that more imperial States deny to their citizens; this makes for the solidarity and stability of families and ensures the child the maximum of care, education, and capital that its parents can give. It is in great part owing to her low birth-rate that France is probably one of the most prosperous countries in the world, and that her gold reserves per head exceed the

[6] Havelock Ellis, *Impressions and Comments*, 1914, p. 160.
[7] *France in the XXth Century*, p. 259.

known averages of other European nations. The grinding poverty of our industrial population is unknown in France; other factors, such as temperance and thrift, come into the question, but the small size of the population makes for fair wages and fair rents. In this connection it should be noted that the terrible housing difficulties of British cities are practically unknown in France."

The French woman's problems, says Mr. George (p. 315), "are simplified by the low birth-rate, the calls on the household funds are obviously less, and, above all, the French woman can find time to be a wife as well as mother, and to create for her husband a home where he is not looked upon as an interloper, entitled solely to toleration as the father of the children."

The outstanding feature of the French mother is her extreme devotion to her children: "Maternal love is a ferocious thing, ready at a pinch to devour the mother herself; in France it is carried to sublime lengths of devotion, to sublime lengths of folly. Owing, perhaps, to the fact that families are small, that they so often number but one child, the mother's love concentrates itself round but few objects; it gains in intensity that which it loses in extent. The child is everything; its well-being, its training, its education, are the mother's perpetual care; French households do not know the nursery where the child is given over to hirelings; it hardly knows the kindergarten where it is estranged from its mother, the

boarding school at an early age where the gentle boy is coarsened and brutalized. Not only does the French mother usually nurse her own baby, but in later years she will attend to its feeding and clothing herself; she will herself give it its first lessons, make it her playmate as well as her toy. In these respects she does not differ from the best British mothers, but the average type seems superior to that known in these isles."

Where the most striking contrast appears, however, is in the matter of education. Even among the working classes home education is a feature, particularly as regards the girls. France does not in this direction suffer under the handicap that afflicts Great Britain, where evil social conditions have driven women into the labor market, ignorant and unorganized.

The constant interchange of ideas between French and German socialists has allowed a realization of the cause of French prosperity to reach the German proletariat. In this and in other ways the rank and file have been influenced in a direction contrary to that in which their generals have striven to lead them. But there is an even more active and significant movement which we must now consider.

VIII.

THE BIRTH STRIKE.

"I think, dearest Uncle, you cannot REALLY *wish me to be the 'Mamma d'une nombreuse famille,' for I think you will see the great inconvenience a* LARGE *family would be to us all, and particularly to the country, independent of the hardship and inconvenience to myself. Men never think, at least seldom think, what a hard task it is for us women to go through this* VERY OFTEN."

QUEEN VICTORIA in a letter to the
King of the Belgians, January 15, 1841.

"Overjoyed at the news that his wife had given birth to another baby, which increased his family to fifteen, a laborer at Hale, Surrey, picked up his bicycle and attempted to swing it over a hedge. In the effort he fell backwards with the machine on top of him, and received injuries to his head and ribs which necessitated his removal to the Farnham Infirmary."—"DAILY MAIL."

"At the Henley Rural District Tribunal the answer to the question to applicants as to how many children they had has invariably been 'One.' . . . Yesterday, however, an applicant stated that he had 15 *children, and the Board of Agriculture representative remarked that the man deserved not only exemption, but high commendation. The military representative agreed, and the Tribunal granted the man absolute exemption."*—"DAILY NEWS."

"Woman is given to us that she may bear children. Woman is our property, we are not hers, because she produces children for us—we do not yield any to her. She is, therefore, our possession as the fruit tree is that of the gardener."—NAPOLEON.

From time to time in England we hear talk of the possibility of a so-called sex war; from time to time emotional writers have referred vaguely to such a war as the possible outcome of the refusal of man to grant the franchise to women. Often, quite as vaguely, a conflict between the interests of male and female labor in Trade Union matters has been suggested by the term. Occasionally some earnest writer has written in bitterness of definite organized action on the part of women. Thus Madame Sarah Grand in the *Daily Chronicle* of August 30th, 1909. She refers to the evil that flourishes in a world, and the apathy of men, who will do nothing

to check poverty, nothing to avert fresh wars: "Has the Boer War taught them anything? That country laid waste, the homes wrecked, those women and children doomed to death amid the horrors of the concentration camps, and all those lives of strong young men sacrificed to settle a difference that might have been amicably adjusted by a few right-minded men in easy conversation after dinner. It has taught us women something. . . . Year by year in this country alone between four and five thousand mothers have hitherto laid down their lives without a murmur in the attempt to bring living children into the world. And to what end? To suffer. Suffering is the only certainty in store for us in life, men say—and it is just about the only thing they do say that is perfectly true. Man makes his own misery, and the misery of those about him, and of those who come after him, and there is only one way—so women are saying—in which women, excluded as they are from all practical participation in the direction of affairs, can prevent the awful needless suffering which men accept in the abstract as a matter of course. . . . 'If children must be born to misery, it is obviously wrong that they should be born at all.' So say the women at the clubs. And what the women are saying amongst themselves at their clubs to-day will be the talk of the fashionable dinner-tables to-morrow, and the common places of the country a few years hence."

A few years passed, and women still refused to fulfill

the prophecy—save only the working women of Berlin. They refused to listen to the exhortations of the patriots who desired them to provide ever fresh food for cannon in a war which they saw might only too easily be an aggressive war. Equally they refused to listen to their own leaders adjuring them to provide fighters in the endless class-war whose end had been so long delayed! The present writer happened to be passing through Berlin at the time of the meetings, and was able to note the disconcerting effect to this bold action on the conservative and reactionary public. Let an American observer describe the situation in relation to the not less instructive discomfiture of the party leaders. Here is the account given in the *Critic and Guide,* October, 1913, by Dr. William J. Robinson, President of the American Society of Medical Sociology, etc., and Editor of the *American Journal of Urology and Sexology.*

"I had read in *Vorwärts* that on that evening a mass meeting, under the auspices of the Social Democratic Party, would take place, at which the subject of the limitation of offspring would be discussed. This was to be the second meeting dealing with this subject. Another meeting had taken place the week before, August 22nd, at which several eminent Socialist women, among them Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin, spoke very strongly against the limitation of offspring among the poor. In fact the title of the discussion was 'Gegen den Geburtstreik!'—'Against the birth strike. . . .' The enthusiasm, or rather the interest, of the audience was intense. One could see that with them it was not merely a dialectic

question, as it was with their leaders, but a matter of life and death.

"I came to attend a meeting *against* the limitation of offspring; it soon proved to be a meeting very decidedly *for* the limitation of offspring, for every speaker who spoke in favor of the artificial prevention of conception, or undesired pregnancies, was greeted with vociferous, long-lasting applause; while those who tried to persuade the people that a small number of children is no proletarian weapon, and would not improve their lot, were so hissed that they had difficulty in going on. The speakers who were against the limitation of offspring idea soon felt that their audience was against them. . . . Why was there such small attendance at the regular Socialistic meetings, while the meetings of this character were packed to suffocation? It did not apparently penetrate the leaders' heads that the reason was a simple one. Those meetings were evidently of no interest to them, while those which dealt with the limitation of offspring were of personal, vital, present interest. . . .

"What particularly amused me—and pained me—in the anti-limitationists was the ease and equanimity with which they advised the poor women to keep on bearing children. The woman herself was not taken into consideration, as if she was not a human being, but a machine. What are her sufferings, her labor pains, her sleepless nights, her inability to read, to attend meetings, to have a taste of life? What does she amount to? The proletariat needs fighters. Go on, females, and breed like animals. Maybe of the thousands you bear a few will become party members. . . . Two points the speakers emphasized repeatedly: that not only absolutely, but proportionately, the largest number of prostitutes (as well as of strike-breakers) comes from the large families; and that the women who are the mothers of many children can but rarely, and with greatest difficulty, be got to interest themselves

in the 'cause,' or even in ordinary culture or literature. They have neither the time nor the inclination.

"When the meeting was over, at 11.30, the matter seemed to stand as follows:—Whether the limitation of offspring is to be considered a revolutionary weapon against militarism and capitalism is questionable; but that it is a wonderful measure in improving the condition of individual families, in guarding the health of the woman, and in generally strengthening the working classes in their political and economic battles, about this there could be no question. And the feeling was that though the Clara Zetkins and Rosa Luxemburgs, and all other literal and figurative old maids, could talk and scold until doomsday, the diminishing birth-rate will go on diminishing still further until such a time when the people will feel that by bringing a child into the world they are not increasing the sum total of human misery, ill-health and wretchedness."

And in this determined attitude the working-women of Berlin have been decidedly influenced by the leaders of the feminist movement, which has lately made great headway amongst the educated classes. Here, for instance, are some sentences from the preface which Frau Marie Stritt, President of the Woman Suffrage Union of Germany, wrote to the German translation of Dr. Rutgers' book, *Rassenverbesserung, Malthusianismus und Neo-malthusianismus.* Frau Stritt occupies a position in the German suffrage movement similar to that held by Mrs. Fawcett in England, and it is interesting to note that a few years ago Mrs. Fawcett went so far as to say, "Nothing will permanently affect pauperism

while the present reckless increase of population continues."

"One would think," wrote Frau Stritt, "that voluntary regulation of the number of children by the mother would be the fundamental, self-evident demand of those who assert on women's behalf all the subjective and objective rights of personality. One would think that the bare suggestion that her most intimate concern should be stripped of free will and personal responsibility and left to blind chance and sex-slavery alone would outrage all the advocates of the woman movement. However, this has not hitherto been the case. There are still few in our ranks who dare to draw the same conclusion for all, and openly to confess their allegiance. . . . The question of family limitation in Germany is still handled in a purely academic way; people sit around the discussion table and exchange opinions, without reckoning at all with the most important factor in their discussion, the mothers immediately concerned. . . . The idea is emphatically rejected for the great masses of the people, though practical Malthusianism is winning ground from day to day in educated circles, that is, with the people around the discussion table. . . . Women still accept in the questions of population the standpoint of men as the only correct one; and try to reconcile themselves to the deepest distress of their own sex with the weak concession that family limitation may be desirable for the individual woman in the individual case but would be harmful to society for certain economic reasons. . . . All her other achievements in the economic, social and intellectual fields, and together with them, all her general cultural achievements, remain illusory, or at best limited to a comparatively small group, so long as women do not have the responsibility of their lives as mothers—so long as, in this most fundamental point of the woman's sphere, they leave the dominion in the hands of blindly-swaying natural forces which civilized man masters in

all other spheres and yokes in the service of his own will and purposes. Thus this question involves for all those who have learned to think things to their conclusion the real *innermost core of the woman question.* Thus in a certain sense the population question is to be regarded as *the* woman question. 'Henceforth the woman will not sigh beneath her fertility as beneath the curse of the lost paradise; through physiological knowledge she has again come to be the mistress of her own body and of her own fate.' These brave words of Dr. Rutgers are already partly true for the educated and possessing classes, thanks to the means of medical science in the last three decades and the practical Malthusianism founded thereupon which has been growing more and more at home in our own country. In view of this fact, however, it is a pressing, an indeniable duty of the middle class woman movement which embraces all these circles, to share its blessings, primarily by means of a general educational propaganda, with those who need them even more, for whom they are a life-and-death question—the weary and heavy-laden mothers of the working people.''

Later, in 1910, Frau Stritt once more appealed to the leaders of the suffrage movement, amongst whom she occupies so honored a position, to face this great question. Again she emphasized the fact that the population question was first developed by educated and uneducated *men,* principally from the point of view of a masculine state and masculine authority. Women have thus either been treated entirely as a negligible quantity, or as a certainly indispensable but unquestioning yoke-bearer for the provision of the greatest possible amount of food for powder; at best as an irresponsible means of ministering to their pleasure. From the standpoint of a

patriarchal society and of a military State this is only logical and consistent. But even among those who prefer a better quality instead of this brutal and most deceptive call for quantity, there are extremely few to whom it is clear that the principal person in this connection is the *woman,* and that the principal factor in the solution of the whole question is the *modern woman's emancipation movement.* This arises partially from the fact that the old supremacy of man—even among the fairest and clearest thinkers—is still too deeply implanted in the blood, for him to realize the idea of leaving the decision to women in the most important of all social questions. She proceeded to point out the extraordinary lack of insight or courage on the part of feminists who have failed to proclaim the intimate connection of their movement with the movement of freedom in women's most personal domain. It is hardly comprehensible that they do not indignantly point out the clear meaning of unwilling, enforced, or accidental motherhood; hardly comprehensible that they lend themselves to the deception of ever being able to realize the elevation of woman to complete citizenship through reforms of an economic, social, ethical, legal or political nature, while she is not freed as a mother from her sex liabilities. With the old feminine shame at calling things by their right names; with a certain ignorance of the world and the false impressions which the numerous unmarried women in the emancipation move-

ment have of the physiological and psychological aspects of motherhood; with the idea of the military state;—she endeavored to explain to some extent these phenomena, although in no way excusing them. She briefly pointed out the unspeakable misery which was the inevitable consequence of uncontrolled reproduction and the merciless sexual subjection of the women in our over-populated civilized countries, with results disastrous to the whole race.

The further implications of the issue thus raised have been more fully developed in the present writer's *Militarism versus Feminism,* issued in 1915, uniform with this study. It is unnecessary therefore to enter into the matter in detail, and the following extract from Chapter IV., to which the present pages are of the nature of a sequel, will serve to indicate the historical background there outlined.

"In every country this dread of being left behind in the ceaseless and unconsidered production of babies, with its persistent degradation of so many women to the position of beasts of burden, leads militarist governments to oppose every effort to reduce the birth-rate. It is in vain that eugenists and social reformers alike have deplored this blind worship of numbers, regardless of quality, regardless of the social squalor which large families entail. Even in twentieth century Europe this first requirement of woman's freedom, the claim to be something more than a domestic animal, is vigorously denied by every state that is organized for war. The right to a share in controlling her own married life is still largely a privilege which has to be won. 'To stunt one's brain in order

that one may bear a son does not seem to me a process essentially sacred or noble in itself,' says Miss Cicely Hamilton, in a book which is slowly creating a revolution of thought on the subject in England, 'yet millions of mothers have instructed their daughters in foolishness so that they, in their turn, might please, marry and beget children.'[1] As Miss Hamilton rightly urges, 'such improvement as has already been effected in the status of the wife and mother is to a great extent the work of the formerly condemned spinster.' And she might, had she realized it, have pointed out that the modern spinster is a product of peace in a double sense—of the peace which allowed the industrial revolution to establish both itself and the possibility of economic independence; of the peace which so far obscured the implications of war that an unmarried woman might claim her place in respectable society.''

To-day, however, the new knowledge makes it unnecessary to regard marriage and the right to an independent personality as mutually exclusive; though for women who prefer the position of domestic animals the privilege of unrestricted child-bearing will still remain!

It is clear from what has preceded that this appeal to women as women has not been without effect. And when once women have realized the facts of the situation, it is never long in any country before the example of France and Holland is followed. The outcry of the Prussian militarists will be of no avail unless the enemies of Germany unwillingly play into their hands. In order more fully to understand the true influence of such

[1] *Marriage as a Trade*, p. 47.

reactionary doctrines as those which we have already quoted, let us consider in greater detail some of the outstanding facts of the present century. First of all let us consider the rapid and continuous fall of the German birth-rate. In no country in the world has such a decline taken place. Between 1900 and 1912 England shows a drop per 1,000 inhabitants from 28 to 25, France from 21 to 19, Germany from 35 to 29. Already before the war the German rate was approximately the same as that in England in 1904-5, in spite of the fact that the English movement had nearly twenty years' start. The German figures speak for themselves:

Births per 1,000 inhabitants:

1860	37.9	1905	34.0
1876	42.6	1906	34.1
1890	37.0	1907	33.2
1895	37.3	1908	33.0
1900	36.8	1909	32.0
1902	36.2	1910	30.7
1903	34.9	1911	29.5
1904	35.2	1912	29.1

The average for the years 1913-1916 is probably between 26 and 27.

In other words, if the percentage of 1906 had prevailed in 1912, there would have been over 300,000 more German children born in 1912 than there actually were. In 1900 there were 2,060,657 children born, and in 1910

only 1,982,836, at a time when the number of marriages remained constant, and the total population was increasing by over 800,000 per annum. Hence Borntraeger[2] concludes that the accelerated decrease in the death-rate was chiefly responsible for the fact that the total population is increasing. And as regards effective man power, just before the war an observer who was studying population questions in that country "noticed that of over a hundred chemists' shops there was only one in which preventive devices were not the most prominent feature in the center of the shop window." The fall of the birth-rate in the principal provincial towns has been most remarkable. In the ten years, from 1902 to 1912, the birth-rate of Leipzig fell from 31.5 to 22.1, of Dresden from 31.5 to 20.3, of Munich from 35.1 to 21.9, and of Hanover from 27 to 20.3. Neukölln, a working-class suburb of Berlin, actually experienced a fall from 25.9 to 23.7 between 1911 and 1912. Frankfort from 22.1 to 20.9, and Schonberg from 15.3 to 13.7. More recently one may note particularly that the number of boys born alive in Germany sank from 1,043,206 in 1901 to 1,028,000 in 1907,[3] whereas previously it had been rising.

And the figures for special centers tell an even more significant tale. Half of the marriages in Berlin are blessed with no more than two children, a quarter with only one child. The number of yearly births per 1,000

[2] *Geburtenrückgang*, p. 4.

[3] O. v. Schjering, *Sanitätsstatistische Betrachtungen*, 1910, No. 9.

married women has sunk from 238 in 1875 to 90 in 1912. This may be set beside the fact that of 11 million French families two million are childless and three million contain only one child.

Since the outbreak of war, moreover, the birth-rate of Berlin has beaten all previous records. In the year 1876 it was over 45 per 1,000. By 1912 it had fallen to 20.4, and by 1914 to about 18 per 1,000. In May, 1915, the births were only 2,669, as against 3,506 in May, 1914, a drop of about 25%.

Nor is the position very different in other parts of the Central Empires. According to a report made by Frau Rosika Schwimmer in 1911, family limitation has been known among the peasant proprietors of Hungary, and practiced since the entry of Napoleon and the French early in last century. To such an extent has this been the case that a one-child system has prevailed among them. More recently lectures have been delivered in the towns by Mme. Nelly Roussel and Dr. Aletta Jacobs, and Prof. Forel has recommended family limitation among the poor. The Hungarian Government is dominated by the small, but very powerful Agrarian interest, who desire plenty of cheap labor on their lands, and strongly oppose this open propaganda, demanding a measure for the restriction of the sale of contraceptive goods. The Government, thinking to obtain medical support to such a measure, referred the question to a Medical Council presided over by Prof. Tauffer and the

principal medical men of Hungary. What was their surprise to find that the Medical Council, after carefully considering the matter in all its aspects, presented a report strongly condemning any such attempt at repression, and stating that family restriction by contraceptive methods was absolutely necessary on medical and on economic grounds, both in the individual and public interest.

IX.

THE INFLUENCES AT WORK.

We have already enumerated some of the forces at work before the close of the last century to stem the devastating torrent of children. In 1897 Dr. Bilfinger, Medical Officer of Health, delivered a number of lectures throughout North Germany on the desirability of family limitation. In Leipzig, for instance, he had an audience of 1,500 women, and even Catholic parents were influenced by the advice he thus publicly gave. The support of medical men is nowhere better illustrated than in the case of Professor Grotjahn, of Berlin University, who in his *Geburten-Rückgang und Geburten-Regelung* has set forth the medical arguments in favor of birth-control with unexampled force and lucidity. It is clear he urges that the movement is very far from having reached its maximum, and though he himself advocates a Dreikinder-Minimal system (p. 289),[1] only

[1] It cannot be too strongly emphasized that childless or one-child families are very far from having the approval of the majority of

one objection is raised to the continuation of the decline in numbers—the patriotic demands of national defense. The author concludes, however, and it is to be hoped that the repopulators mentioned above will take note of the fact, that there is clearly no danger from France in this respect, while Russia is so sparsely populated and has such an unlimited field for expansion in North Asia that there is no prospect of her pressing on the West within a measurable future. On the other hand the Polish people are regarded as uncommonly fertile.[2]

The reality of the popular influences determining the decline can no longer be in doubt. Various writers

advocates of birth-control, and one may remark here that an average of three children per family is necessary to maintain a stationary population in any country. Grotjahn incidentally urges that limitation increases the proportion of first-borns to the total population, and on very scanty evidence seems to accept this alleged inferiority. [The "evidence" of the inferiority to first-born is scanty indeed, and has been shown to be worthless by those who have given the subject a careful study.—W. J. R.] He also lays stress on the fact that under the present system—whereby the knowledge of the six most effective and entirely harmless modern methods of regulating the number of children is largely confined to the educated classes—the unfit and less efficient stocks are tending to multiply with disproportionate rapidity. He does not, however, introduce into the discussion any of the class prejudice which has done so much to discredit the official Eugenic movement in England. His inference is the correct one—that the knowledge of rational control should be universal, and not (as our conservative propagandists maintain) that the worthies whose names are immortalized in *Who's Who* should be goaded into greater fecundity.

[2] Cf. A. Dix in *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie*, 1898.

(Koeffe, Hoffa) have recorded that parents with large families are laughed at by their neighbors, and in 1910 Hoffa referred in the *Zeitschrift für Säuglingsschutz* to the fact that contraceptives were openly sent to newly married couples. A booklet by the Berlin doctor, Alfred Bernstein, with the title "How Can We Ensure a Decline in the Birth-rate: an Appeal to the Working Classes," has recently had a tremendous success, over 10,000 copies being sold in three weeks.

Nor have the utterances of economists, with the exceptions already noted, been less conducive to the spread of the movement than those of the medical profession. The well-known Berlin professor, von Schmoller, agrees entirely with John Stuart Mill that it is better in every way to produce fewer children and devote proper attention to their education, than to think as people now do only of quantity. Reinhold (*Die bewegende Kräfte der Volkswirtschaft*) says the same thing in even stronger terms. Mombert of Freiburg regards the decline of the birth-rate as a normal civilizing influence: while Szöllösny also regards it as the main factor which will advance movements for freedom and emancipation. No less fanatical a nationalist than Sombart has welcomed the decline in the birth-rate, and declared that the decline must inevitably continue.[3]

Strange to say the civil service has for the most part

[3] Werner Sombart, *Documents du progrès*, 1907, p. 58.

directly discouraged early marriages,[4] especially in the postal service. All postal employees in Bavaria (*Postzeitung,* 1896, p. 332) must fulfill four conditions in order to obtain the sanction of the authorities to marriage. They must be (*a*) 26 years old, (*b*) in sound financial circumstances, (*c*) possessed of a good service record, (*d*) able to satisfy the officials that their work will not suffer. Equally stringent are the demands of the postal authorities in Düsseldorf, where the economic position of the young lady is also enquired into! (*Pos. Neuest. Nachr.* 5 X 1910).

Then again a growing understanding of the conditions under which the poor live has brought many to a realization that schemes for social reform will for ever be confronted with the desolating flood of babies, until the one obvious remedy has been adopted. Such books as Otto Rühle's *Das proletarische Kind,* revealing a gray and gruesome picture similar to that in Alexander Patterson's *Across the Bridges,* have worked in the same direction. A lady health-inspector, Auguste Lange,[5] recently declared with emphasis: "the discussions of the birth-rate in the press, their complaints and fears, make anything but the desired impression on those who are brought into daily contact with the terrible conditions of overcrowding in prolific families."

Hence it is not surprising to find that in a lecture

[4] O. Kresse, *Der Geburtenrückgang in Deutschland,* Berlin, 1912.
[5] Elster, "Geburtenzahl und Geburtenwert," *Universum,* 1913.

delivered on the 7th of December, 1915, to the Verein für Wissenschaftliche Heilkunde in Königsberg, Dr. Richter declared that no repressive measures could avail to cope with the present situation. Birth-control could not be opposed. Measures of social reform, and especially housing reform, alone could raise the birth-rate.[6] And Marcuse, the author of an able volume en-

[6] Some surprising misunderstandings are prevalent with regard to the effect of measures of social reform on the birth-rate. Professor Pigou, whose only other excursion into the theory of population (*Wealth and Welfare,* p. 94) is in the highest degree reprehensible, has ably marshaled the evidence for the conclusion that prosperity often involves limitation. But like Brentano (*Economic Journal,* 1910, pp. 371-393), and even Sidney Webb, he confines himself chiefly to generalities about character and ideals, completely neglecting the fact that it is precisely increased prosperity which enables the working man successfully to take advantage of those methods of prevention by which a given standard of living may be maintained. A second physiological consideration of which most male publicists are ignorant would be to the effect that whether owing to a more sensitive nervous organization, or, perhaps, to some increase in the size of the embryo (especially the head), educated women nowadays are often not only unwilling but unable to stand the strain of bearing more than two or three children. But though a physiological motive for voluntary restriction here comes into play, it is very necessary to point out that this by no means implies that *natural* adaptation of *fertility* to circumstances which is assumed by Henry George (cf. the conclusions of Parmelee, *Poverty and Social Progress,* 1916, pp. 185-6); and those who still anticipate a solution of the population question along the lines of "moral restraint" are not likely to find an escape from the pessimism of earlier followers of Malthus other than artificial restriction—unless, indeed, they see fit to advocate the even more "artificial" diminution of desire on the part of the male, now being discussed in certain quarters.

titled *Die Beschränkung der Geburtenzahl,* 1913, who addressed a large meeting on the subject in Munich at the end of 1915, has set forth in detail (*D. M. Wochenschrift,* 1916, p. 257) the reasons for this conclusion and pointed out that one of the chief methods of avoiding conception is not amenable to law, and admittedly more injurious to health than those chiefly considered, while another is the main safeguard against disease. Dr. Scholtz (ibid., p. 273) points out that since 8% of all marriages are sterile, since gonorrhea causes the loss of 200,000 children yearly, and since 10% of men are syphilitic, the most profitable policy is to combat these diseases; and Dr. G. Winter (*Zbl. f. Gyn.,* 5) prefers to urge proper attention for women during confinement.

Indeed one of the greatest influences which have deterred ignorant authorities from suppressing the new knowledge has been the activity of the Society for the Combating of Venereal Diseases, whose strongly-worded resolution at the Dresden meeting in 1911 had a great effect. In the Report of the British Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases (Cd. 8189—Minutes of Evidence, cd. 7475, 8190) recently presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of His Majesty, it is stated that the Commissioners invited Professor Blaschko to come over to London to give an account of the progress attained in combating venereal disease in Germany. At p. 185 of the final report, Professor Blaschko explains

why competent authorities oppose the view that preventive measures will remove the safeguards of morality. He says:—

"Considering that in spite of all commandments of morality and religion so many thousands expose themselves and other persons to venereal infection, we think it necessary to give young ignorant people the possibility of protecting themselves. German laws do not forbid the selling of these articles, but forbid public advertising even in a decent manner. Preventives are considered as articles 'destined for immoral purposes.' Accordingly, although these means are officially recommended and used in the army and navy, the slightest recommendation to the public, even to the medical public, is punished. The German Society has vainly tried to change this state of things."

Professor Blaschko added:—

"A further improvement in our work of enlightenment was the organizing of a representation of Brieux's drama, *Les Avariés* (*Damaged Goods* in the English translation). Most of our local branches as well as the head society supported the representations. In Berlin alone the piece was played over one hundred times at seven theaters. In many large and small German towns traveling theatrical companies played this piece. The work of the German Society has thoroughly changed the public opinion on venereal diseases. The *press*, especially the press of the great towns, is no longer afraid of using the words 'syphilis' and 'venereal diseases'; they give full accounts of our annual meetings and the local papers give reports of the meetings of the branches. In fact the whole press—and not only the press, but also the public—is in sympathy with and supports our movement."

It need hardly be pointed out that the publicity here referred to has been very important in assisting the propaganda we are dealing with. Moreover, in this respect the Army and Navy have shown themselves in Germany not less enlightened in the matter than the American Navy. As a naval representative said in 1908 (*Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft zur Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1909): The military and naval authorities have the merit of not entering on theoretical discussion *sondern diejenigen Mittel* (*die Verbreitung der Kondome*) *aufgegriffen zu haben welche die Wissenschaft zur Verhütung der Geschlechtskrankheiten bietet.* Unfortunately in 1912 the Army regulations were altered in favor of a much less satisfactory system of prophylaxis.

X.

THE FUTURE.

"For all those among us who have faith in civilization and humanity it must be a daily prayer that the fall of the birth-rate may be hastened."—Havelock Ellis, September 25th, 1915.

Against such a powerful and widespread movement repressive measures must inevitably fail, even if repression were not condemned by so many authorities. As *Vorwärts* said briefly on October 16, 1915:—"The decline in the birth-rate is attributed to deliberate limitation, due to economic considerations. The war will increase this tendency, for it will leave many cripples, who will not be able to earn a good wage; it has extended the employment of women, which is unfavorable to bearing children, and it will have increased the pressure of poverty generally. *It is idle to fight against the falling birth-rate.*"

Even more conclusive is the following, which appeared shortly before the war in the Strasburg *Freie Presse:*—

"One of the most important laws of experience in politics is as follows: a movement which finds its origin in the general economic and social conditions cannot be checked by legislative prohibition, but will only be brought by it to more rapid fruition. The people, when they choose their representatives, should ask each candidate if he recognizes the truth of this law. If he does not, he should be sent to the rightabout as a fraud of the worst kind. In our reactionarily-ruled Germany the superstitious belief in the omnipotence of the law is especially strong. There are people who believe that the wind must cease blowing and the sun cease shining if only a law is made against them. These people have now come to the conclusion that, in order to check the fall of the birth-rate, the sale of contraceptive devices should be forbidden. The first consequence that they have produced with their agitation is that they have compelled people to deal openly with matters on which one would rather *not* speak; since, when it is a question of repelling a brutal attack upon personal liberty, all other considerations must be thrown on one side. The service which the promoter of the bill in the Reichstag has rendered is to have made the bedchamber the subject of public discussion! What the bill would attain—we say it openly—is a disgrace. It will force every poor couple who groan under the burden of a numerous progeny into still greater reproduction. It will compel parents who have undertaken to give their few children a decent upbringing to bring more children into the world than they can possibly bring up and feed. . . . The existing law punishes abortion with heavy penalties; yet all the world knows that if all those who are guilty of this offense, either directly or as helpers, were really punished, the builders would all have their hands full in building new prisons. If now it were possible to remove all contraceptive devices from circulation, abortion would become even more common, and no one could prevent it. It would only be possible to make an example by throwing some unfortunate woman into prison. The propagan-

dist effect of the bill will be enormous, and the supporters of the so-called birth-strike—although combated by the Social-Democratic Party—can shout hurrah. If this worst outbreak of legislative imbecility does not vanish speedily into that darkness from which it should never have emerged, then—no matter whether the bill becomes law or not—the adoption of the two-child system in Germany is assured.''

It is statements such as these which are significant for the future—rather than the vain lamentations of the official classes which are so frequently reproduced in this country. Nevertheless the militarists will make an appeal on the one ground which is still left to them—patriotism. They will continue to point to the undeniable increase in Russia, to the still expanding population of the Anglo-Saxons. This appeal, as in other countries, is the one remaining source of danger—the prime and continuous basis of war in the past.

We are thus led to the somewhat paradoxical conclusion that the chief influence which will determine the attitude of Germany towards her birth-rate in the future, will be the behavior of her neighbors. The problem is in a special sense international:—

''We are brought face to face with an inexorable contradiction. If the citizens of a country, by voluntary effort, by devotion to country, engender without restraint, the community will acquire considerable military power; but all social progress is prevented. It must say farewell to reforms. All its efforts must tend to the conservation of existence. In order to maintain life, citizens must deprive themselves of those things which give life its charm.

"If, on the other hand, the individuals who compose the nation wish to progress, to develop, to live; if, in order to attain this truly human ideal, they depart from the instinctive habits of the non-human animal; if they limit their offspring in order to raise themselves in dignity, in wealth, in intellectual power; to overcome the perils in which organic nature abounds, and to investigate the secrets of nature—then their country will be vanquished, invaded, spoiled of its wealth, and their children ruined and reduced to partial slavery."[1]

The need for a proper understanding of the situation is urgent, since only on international lines can the difficulty be solved. Even now there are those who would not scruple to set the White race against the Yellow, rather than help the downtrodden women of the East to the knowledge that the women of Europe now possess! As our enquiry has suggested, we are confronted by what is essentially a woman's question, *the* one great question, in fact, which women are now called upon to face; and upon their response the future must depend.

Here, perhaps, may be discovered the most fruitful field for the activities of the Women's International League, whose foundation was one of the outstanding social developments of the first year of the war. The task of such a body should clearly be to concentrate on those fundamental problems of the situation which, while vital to the future of the women's movement as a whole, cannot be adequately grappled with by the national so-

[1] Alfred Naquet, *L'Humanité et la Science,* Paris, 1901.

cieties already in existence. It is clearly the duty of feminist leaders not to allow their energies to be diverted into channels suggested by the immediate needs and difficulties of a changing political situation. To many, such a policy might seem to deprive the organization of practical value. But this is an entirely superficial view. The Population question, like the question of Militarism, is one of the root problems which should now more and more occupy the thoughts of far-sighted reformers. The great need is for a body that shall undertake the task of educating and directing our efforts, so apt to be at the mercy of transient agitations, towards these two essentials, without which the forces of violence and repression must continue to hold sway. At present it is possible for powerful interests to play one nation against another, so that none will take the first step. If, after the war, the same mad fertility race is to continue, no settlement, no form of international organization within measurable distance of realization will avail to prevent a recurrence of the catastrophe; and no measure of social reform is likely to do more than temporarily alleviate the evils which an unrestricted birth-rate brings in its train.

THE END.

THERE will come a time—and it is not far off—when the prevention of undesired pregnancy will be as proper, as respectable and as much the function of the medical practitioner as is now the prevention of typhoid, diphtheria or tuberculosis. W. J. R.

THERE is no single measure that would so positively, so immediately contribute toward the happiness and progress of the human race as teaching the people the proper means of prevention of conception. W. J. R.